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Irving Babbitt

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

IN JULY 1933 in his little house in Cambridge, Massachusetts, died at sixty-seven Irving Babbitt, Professor of French Literature at Harvard and a chief intellect of our generation.

Babbitt was altogether a scholar and teacher whose thought was his life. Externally that life was uneventful. He was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1865; his father a doctor of unorthodox medical ideas, interested in theories of light and colour, and full of the so-called "advanced" ideas of the nineteenth century, especially of the undiscriminating "humanitarianism" of which his son was to become so doughty an opponent; his mother an amiable but helpless sort of woman. Accordingly he had little bringing up, and it was out of an unguided boyhood and youth that he himself worked out his strict self-discipline. In high school he was awakened to a love of the classics, and fortunately he had a brother who was generous and also prosperous in the up-and-down American fashion, who gave him money to go through Harvard. Having interrupted his studies with a year spent in tramping with a classmate all over Europe, principally in Spain, using his astonishing gift for languages to learn to speak not only Spanish but also French, German, and Italian, he was graduated in 1889 and then he was off again, this time to Paris where he studied Sanskrit and Pali at the Collège de France under Sylvain Lévi. Returning to Cambridge for the second time, he took his M.A. in 1893. He wanted to teach the classics, but with his habitual distaste or inability for intrigue he had not ingratiated himself with the Harvard Classical Department so that—greatly to the disadvantage of American classical studies—they would give him no appointment. After a year of teaching French at Williams College he again returned to Harvard, this time as instructor in Romance languages. There he stayed for the remaining thirty-eight years of his life, travelling occasionally, lecturing sometimes as far away as California or Paris. In 1900 he married; in 1912 his University, somewhat tardily, made him a full Professor of French literature. Such was the background to a life of enormous intellectual labour and constant intellectual combat.

His life was a doubly concentrated one: he not only centered his life upon scholarship, teaching, and writing, but also steadily pursued a single aim and preached an unvarying faith. No commander trained in Napoleon's school ever sought victory over the principal mass of a hostile army with a more single mind than that with which Babbitt devoted himself to attacking the vast chaos of contemporary life and thought and to replacing that chaos with a truly human order. Humanism was his god, and to its service he devoted a great, virile personality, a solid and sober eloquence set off with dry, cutting wit, and a learning of astonishing accuracy and vastness.

His students used to run a regular betting pool like those made on ocean liners as to the length of the ship's daily run, only this pool of theirs was concerned with the number of writers which he would mention in each of his fifty-five-minute lectures. It is said that he once mentioned seventy-five—1.36 authors to the minute—and the present writer himself would have been willing to bet that all seventy-five were correctly cited, so accurate was Babbitt's memory and so careful his written notes on his enormous reading not only in modern languages, especially English, French, and German, but also in Greek, Latin, Pali, and Sanskrit; to his deep regret he did not know Chinese.

The first article of Babbitt's humanist creed was the dual nature of man. He saw clearly that all men are born with desire for beauty, truth, and goodness, which if perfectly combined would result in a perfect order; and at the same time with a tendency to evil, which tendency, if not grasped by the intellect and opposed by the will, results in intolerable disorder. He taught that this basic fact of man's dual nature has been obscured by the naturalist school of thought, in which he distinguishes two main branches or currents; first scientific naturalism or "Baconian utilitarianism", concentrating upon the laws governing physical objects; second, and to him even more important, emotional naturalism which considers man as an instinctive and emotional creature, in short a kind of animal. Accordingly this school, including the romantics and beginning with Rousseau, has systematically belittled the human intellect and will. Seeking to wriggle away from the basic problem of evil, the naturalists have produced the modern chaos which can be resolved into order only when men cease to emphasize that which they have in common with brute nature and exalt that which is specifically human.

In dealing with a writer, especially with a lucid and systematic writer like Babbitt, one can hardly do better than quote. He himself, although he saw clearly the vagueness and the flabby German metaphysics in which much of Emerson's thought bogs down, was fond of quoting certain lines of Emerson's:

> There are two laws discrete
> Not reconciled,
> Law for man, and law for thing;
> The last builds town and fleet,
> But it runs wild,
> And doth the man unking.

Perhaps he best summed up his own doctrine in the introduction to his book *Rousseau and Romanticism*:

> . . . My argument aims to reassert the "law for man", and its special discipline against the various forms of naturalistic excess. . . . Goethe and Sainte-Beuve and Renan and Arnold . . . mean by the modern spirit . . . the positive and critical spirit, the spirit that refuses to take things on authority. . . . One should not only welcome the efforts of the man of science at his best to put the natural law on a positive and critical basis, . . . one should strive to emulate him in one's dealings with the human law; and so become a complete positivist. . . . "All those who took the romantic promises at their face value," says Bourget, "rolled in abysses of despair and ennui." If anyone still holds, as many of the older romanticists held, that it is a distinguished thing to roll in abysses of despair and

> ennui, he should read me no further . . . Those who call themselves modern have come to adopt a purely exploratory attitude towards life. "On desperate seas long wont to roam", they have lost more and more the sense of what is normal and central in human experience. But to get away from what is normal and central is to get away from wisdom. . . . The results . . . are being written large in disastrous events. . . . The whole modern experiment is threatened with breakdown simply because it has not been sufficiently modern. One should therefore not rest content until one has, with the aid of the secular experience of both the East and the West, worked out a point of view so modern that, compared with it, that of our smart young radicals will seem antediluvian.

On such a broad programme as this, with only his pen and his professorial chair for levers, Babbitt set out to move the world. Nor did he entirely fail.

At this point the reader may object that such a programme has little in common with humanism as known to history. The humanist scholars of the Renaissance, far from insisting upon discipline and the problem of evil, were emancipators. Some were out to rid the world of all Christian restraints, so that men might return to the–supposedly–free life of the senses; all hated the strict mediaeval logic and loved the beauties of this world, the many-voweled melody of Greek, Latin at once exquisite and majestic, the full bodied splendour of classic columns, and the glory of athletes and goddesses of marble. Not a few would have added the more fleshly charms of

Mistresses with great, smooth, marbly limbs.

Babbitt recognized the force of the objection but replied that notwithstanding his insistence upon morals and his feeling for literature as chiefly a mirror and source of ideas, his humanism was none the less doubly related with that of history: first because both were founded upon classical studies, second because both were concerned with purely human things. No small part of the difference in emphasis, he said, came because the Renaissance scholars were seeking to humanize a culture unduly concentrated upon the things of God, whereas he himself was contending with a generation which had succeeded in squirming down from the purely human level to that of the brutes. At all events the classics were deeply ingrained in him; in his worship of decorum there was much of the spirit of that ancient art which portrayed even the seizure of a nymph in graceful and rhythmic fashion—in real life when a fleeing girl is violently grabbed one would expect the result to look a ghastly mess. There was much of the more sombre Epicureans in his cult of measure, much that was Lucretian and Stoic in his assertion of human self-respect and self-sufficiency. The seventeenth-century humanists had indeed swung classical studies around to supporting social and religious order. Finally, among the ancient writers Babbitt could cite the second-century Aulus Gellius in direct support of his position, as we shall see.

Certainly no rogue-scholar of the Renaissance could have claimed to be a more devoted classicist than Babbitt. Toward the end of his life he said that he had already defined his position in a lecture delivered at the University of Wisconsin as early as 1895 entitled "The Rational Study of the Classics". And every one of his six published books was a variation on the same theme.

His first book, *Literature and the American College*, was published in 1908 with the subtitle of "Essays in Defense of the Humanities", the verses already quoted from Emerson for its motto, and in its opening pages the following quotation from Aulus Gellius:

> *Humanitas* . . . is incorrectly used to denote a "promiscuous benevolence, what the Greeks call philanthropy", whereas the word really implies doctrine and discipline, and is applicable not to men in general but only to a select few,–it is, in short, aristocratic and not democratic in its implication.

The first chapter of *Literature and the American College* also contained two passages very typical of the man. He neatly beheads the whole humanitarian tribe as follows:

> The poet Schiller . . . speaks as a humanitarian and not as a humanist when he would "clasp the millions to his bosom", and bestow "a kiss upon the whole world". The humanist is more selective in his caresses.

To those who knew him, the phrase recalls the happiness of his marriage. A little later he shows us perhaps his weakest spot when he writes that the human mind, in order to remain sane, should sometimes look upon itself, in the words of Sainte-Beuve, "as only the most fugitive of illusions in the bosom of the infinite illusion". He had looked too long into the horrible Oriental abyss of Buddhism. And yet in general the book is vigorously Western in spirit, insisting that the college teaching of literature, freeing itself both from mushy dilettantism and from arid concentration on philological details, should be a discipline capable of forming the mind against scientific naturalism *à la*

Bacon as well as emotional naturalism *à la* Rousseau. Curiously enough, although the romantic-naturalists were his chosen target, during his early manhood it was the crabbed philologers—led by the impressive figure of Professor Kittredge the Shakespearian arch-pedant—who hampered his academic advancement. Although he had no personal quarrels with his seniors of the faculty, they felt a deep antagonism between their ideals and his, and the consequent slowness of his promotion remains a disgrace to my own proud university of Harvard.

Literature and the American College was followed two years later by *The New Laokoon*, subtitled "An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts". Babbitt was thought bold and even rash in that his use of the word Laokoon challenged comparison with the *Laokoon* of Lessing, the eighteenth-century German critic. Today, however, it is Lessing who seems far more likely to profit by the association; for instance the German's *Nathan the Wise* is so extravagantly pro-Semitic as to draw from fair-minded Jews like Maurice Samuel the complaint that it caricatures them into "plaster saints". And for a Jew to rebel against over-praise of Jews is no small event. *The New Laokoon* argues that although the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century neo-classicists fell into the error of taking Aristotle's advice to imitate that which is normal and central in life to mean that one should formally imitate models, on the other hand the romantic-naturalists have fallen into a far worse confusion through idolizing "spontaneous" emotion while refusing to reason. Of this confusion the artistic symptom is the slopping over of every art into the proper sphere of the next, in "word painting", "programme music", "colour-audition", et cetera. Thus each, in trying to invade its neighbour, loses power over its own proper sphere. At the root of this clashing artistic anarchy is a confusion as to the actual values of life; Babbitt notes that Byron, praising Rousseau as a lover of ideal Beauty goes on to say that Jean Jacques

> . . . knew
> How to make madness beautiful, and threw
> O'er erring thoughts and deeds a heavenly hue.

Babbitt goes on: "This use of imaginative illusion in making madness beautiful would, if traced down, bring us at last to what has been termed the phosphorescent slime of some of our modern decadents." Unfortunately the inhabitants of our ever multiplying insane aslyums are not altogether beautiful.

> If the arts lack dignity, centrality, repose, it is because the men of the present have no centre, no sense of anything fixed or permanent either within or without themselves, that they may oppose to the flux of phenomena and the torrent of impressions. In a word, if confusion has crept into the arts, it is merely a special aspect of a more general malady, of that excess of sentimental and scientific naturalism from which . . . the occidental world is now suffering.

In our revolt against formalism, instead of searching like Sophocles's Antigone for the higher laws

> . . . eternal in the heavens

we have slipped down into a hatred of all restraint, a mania for liberty which is all too visibly avenging itself upon our society.

The man of letters should not be so modest as to leave all the analytical keenness and intellectual virility to the scientist. Art cannot live on intellectualism yet the pathway to the kind of creative art we need lies through the intellect. So far from fighting shy of the "false secondary power by which we multiply distinctions", we should make as many and as clear distinctions as possible and then project them like vivid sunbeams into the romantic twilight. That indeed should be the function of criticism at the present hour,—to bring once more into honour the broad, masculine and vigorous distinction. We might then have a type of writing that is not intended primarily for women and men in their unmasculine moods,—for the tired scientist and the fagged philologist and the weary man of business.

Although the title of Babbitt's third book, *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*, suggests a lesser range than the wide sweep of *The New Laokoon*, this suggestion is due more to its author's contempt for publicity, or, if you prefer, to his lack of journalistic flair than to the matter of the book itself. He loved France because he knew her well, indeed like most non-provincial observers of Europe, he saw in France both the chief force in European civilization and the pivot around which all civilization turns. Coming from almost anyone else, the book would justly have been saluted as great. Note, for example, the conclusion of the chapter on Sainte-Beuve:

> He is likely to be looked on more and more, in M. France's phrase, as the universal doctor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas of the nineteenth century; not as the greatest man of the century, but possibly as the most representative, the one who embodied most completely its aspiration

towards horizontality, its magnificent widening out of knowledge and sympathy, and, some would add, its lack of adequate central aim. That so shrewd an observer as Sainte-Beuve could find no firm anchorage for the spirit in the movements peculiar to this century may in the long run turn out to be not to his discredit, but to the discredit of the century. It may become apparent that something was omitted in the whole nineteenth-century view of life and that this something is the keystone of the arch.

Nevertheless his best work was still to come.

The Masters of Modern French Criticism was followed in 1919 by *Rousseau and Romanticism*, again a title which somewhat obscures the scope of the book itself. A less academic man, more intent upon a wider immediate effect, might have called it *Rousseau and the Modern World*, *Rousseau and Contemporary Chaos*, or even *Rousseau, Architect of Contemporary Chaos*. Both the theme and his treatment of it cry out for a title emphasizing their urgent, tragic interest. For years Babbitt had concerned himself with Rousseau, over whose memory the French fight so fiercely because both sides see in him the father of the whole huge romantic-naturalist, democratic movement. Recognizing the importance of the eighteenth-century Apostle of Nature and Primitive Simplicity, the great Humanist at once explained and demolished Rousseau and his doctrines with an encyclopaedic learning and a breadth of judgement that few scholars, even in cultured France, could have surpassed and few could have equalled. He saw that when the true classicist speaks of "Nature" he means representative, central, normal, human nature, by no means the dismal swamp of eccentricity and primitive barbarism into which the romantic-naturalists bogged down. Seeking to found human brotherhood not like classicists or traditional Christians on the firm base of a common discipline but on mere "spontaneous" instinct and expansive emotion, the Rousseauists from Marat and Robespierre to the men of '48, from them to the primitive tribalism of Wilhelm II's Germany, and from that to Lenin and Trotsky, have produced little but a vast pyramid of corpses, reeking up its odour to heaven like a sort of devil's incense to testify to the romantic-naturalist lie. The truth, as anyone who knows children can bear witness, is that undisciplined instinct and spontaneous emotion are at least as likely to be egotistic and combative as to be brotherly—perhaps even less likely to be sisterly. But from this truth the naturalists were shut out by their insufficient recognition of evil, "the fact of sin, a fact as plain as potatoes", as Chesterton once put it. Oh no, they say to the traditionalists, nature has made man essentially good; his little peccadilloes are only accidental, due to no more than this or that unfortunate environment, to some unnatural institution imposed upon him by society. "Give him a chance", let him express his real self, reform society, amend the constitution and all will be well. Alas, when these masters of romantic enchantment struck the rock of reality with their false divining rod, no perfect humans appeared, but only rivers of blood flowing in monotonous horror from massacre to massacre. Is this mere scolding? Would that the cold casualty statistics of 1793-1815, of 1914-18, and of Bolshevist Russia were not there to prove it.

At this point I digress to note that Babbitt was not seldom accused of pride. Whether there were any truth in the charge we need not here debate; he himself wrote "It is perhaps not easy to combine . . . far-ranging intellectual curiosity . . . with the humility so emphasized by . . . Oriental teachers"; if some trained theologian had known him well then that theologian would have been worth hearing on the subject. But surely if ever a man was sorely tempted to pride it must have been our Humanist when he compared himself to the rabble of pigmies who attacked him. On my desk lies a yellowed copy of a long newspaper review of *Rousseau and Romanticism*, dated September, 1919, just ten months after the Armistice stopped the fighting without bringing peace. The wretched wood-pulp paper is falling to pieces, let us hope that its shreds and patches are symbolic of our time. But with careful piecing together almost all the two-column notice can still be read. The anonymous reviewer is not only literate, he (or she) has a really good style, but unfortunately writes rubbish like this: ". . . Not all the acts of these wild . . . years [of romanticism] have been bad. They have seen in our own country . . . the freedom of the individual made a tolerably solid reality." This of the United States in the year of prohibition, contemporary with the second year of the Russian Soviets. Further on: "Romanticism . . . says: Let us venture; die if need be, but try; leave the restricted and seek the new which alone can supply the road to the vulgar heart's infinite demand." Apparently the reviewer sees with satisfaction our not inconsiderable—although apparently not yet finished—piles of dead, and is content to note that the great unwashed have been encouraged to demand everything in sight.

In 1924, five years after *Rousseau and Romanticism*, appeared *Democracy and Leadership*, the one book of Babbitt's with a title suggesting the breadth and power of his attack upon the ideas he hated with so much passion and so much dignity. Except perhaps for *Rousseau and Romanticism*, the present writer thinks it the finest of his writings. It is full of quotable things; Machiavelli is defined as the most successful of all forward-lookers because he correctly guessed the spirit of modern history, and contemporary social workers of the "uplifter" type are pilloried as pernicious examples of spiritual complacency. It contains closely reasoned summaries of the types of political thinking since the Renaissance, of the influence of religions upon social forms, and of the transformations of the liberal idea. But among so much ripe wisdom perhaps the most significant chapter is that on Rousseau as a political thinker. We hear Jean Jacques admitting his devouring envy of the rich, and describing them as "ravening wolves, who having once tasted human flesh, refuse every other food, and henceforth desire to devour only men"; we note his prophecy that the world is ". . . entering the era of crises and of revolutions"—together with Babbitt's comment that he did more than any other one man to make his own forecast come true. Then follows an analysis of Rousseau's two extremes, of philosophical anarchy through the liberation of every passion, and then of collectivism under the unlimited sovereignty of a tyrannical "general will". A telling point is that this general will is continually changing and completely irresponsible. It is always free to overturn a social order but it is incapable of making a binding treaty. As these lines are written, a clipping lies before me quoting the London *Daily Express* as follows: "A treaty is only valid if it commands the valid acceptance of the mass of the people. The people of Britain do not accept the treaty of Locarno. . . . They are not going to be dragged into any conflict in Europe. No document could ever make them do so." Babbitt goes on to note that the preaching of Rousseau's sentimental, undisciplined, and illusory type of brotherhood has been fruitful in civil massacres and in great wars. Moreover those who believe in the perfection or near perfection of mankind have invariably proved willing to prostrate themselves before some ruthless and outwardly successful man, perhaps Napoleon, perhaps some megalomaniac "captain of industry". If we define imperialism broadly as the desire to domineer over others, then the chief political result of radical democracy has been a decadent imperialism. Both in its unanswerable indictment of radical democracy and its cult of moderation, the book, notwithstanding its persistent appeal to the constitutional democracy of Washington, Hamilton, Marshall, and Lincoln, reads today like a manual for the dictators and Fascist statesmen who seem destined to reorder our contemporary chaos.

It is no disparagement of Babbitt's last book, *On Being Creative*, to say that it does not equal the best of his previous works. Being a collection of essays it could not hope to equal the impressive and orderly sequence of thought in *The New Laokoon*, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, and *Democracy and Leadership*. There are fine things in it which would have made the reputation of a lesser man, but it is not Babbitt at his best.

One might dwell at some length on the omissions or weaknesses of the positive side of Babbitt's doctrine. It is strange that so powerful an intellect, deeply concerned with those things in man which are not animal but specifically human, so insistent (as he himself said in *Democracy and Leadership*) that for good or ill "man is . . . the infinite animal", should have so persistently shied away from the idea of God. Perhaps the crudity and barbarous taboos of the Bible-worshipping Protestant sects of his Ohio youth were responsible; perhaps it was the faint but unmistakable odour of Unitarian skepticism still clinging to Harvard; it may have been the bitter hatred of all Christian things that fills the official French universities; perhaps the old Jew Lévi at the Collège de France found a way to feed a racial hatred of the Faith by swerving young minds towards the bottomless pit of Buddhism. At all events, there was this queer gap in Babbitt's thought.

As with the idea of God, so with Christianity, Babbitt saw clearly that Our Lord's distinction between the things of Caesar and those of God was at the root of the modern idea of personal liberty, of which the ancient world had known nothing. Toward traditional religious forms he would not seldom show a certain "surly sympathy" like that which Chesterton has noted in Dr. Johnson's attitude toward Roman Catholicism. Take, for instance, the following passage, again from *Democracy and Leadership*:

> The choice to which the modern man will finally be reduced, it has been said, is that of being a Bolshevist or a Jesuit. In that case (assuming that by Jesuit is meant the ultramontane Catholic) there does not seem to be much

> room for hesitation. Ultramontane Catholicism does not, like Bolshevism, strike at the very root of civilization. In fact, under certain conditions that are already partly in sight, the Catholic Church may perhaps be the only institution left in the Occident that can be counted on to uphold civilized standards.

And yet he consistently refused to take seriously the claims of either Anglican or Roman Catholicism. Indeed in his later years he used to say—most unjustly—that his good friend Paul Elmer More had "become a little hipped" on religion!

As with God and the Church, so with purely human tradition in the matter of social forms. He was as far as the poles away from the vulgar haters of tradition; on the contrary his studies of Burke showed real sympathy for it. His views on the checks and balances of the American Constitution, especially the Supreme Court, his appreciation of the practical wisdom of the Founders who made the Constitution, and of the realistic unionism of Lincoln, showed clearly that he might have turned his selective and critical mind to the defense of all that is worth defending in American institutions. Indeed such defense might have increased his immediate influence; he might have become a sort of American Maurras. He preferred not to do so. On the contrary he persistently emphasized his lack of sympathy with the traditional, and often highly rational, loyalties which Europe calls reactionary. The following passage of the preface to *The New Laokoon* is typical of his attitude:

> A year or so ago I chanced to be strolling along one of the narrow streets that skirt the Quartier Saint-Germain, and came on a bookshop entirely devoted to reactionary

literature; and there in the window, along with books recommending the restoration of the monarchy, was the volume of M. Lasserre and other anti-romantic publications. Now I for one regret that a legitimate protest against certain tendencies of nineteenth-century life and literature should be thus mixed up with what we may very well deem an impossible political and religious reaction. A movement would seem needed that shall be somewhat less negative and more genuinely constructive than the one M. Lasserre and his friends are trying to start in France; a movement that shall preserve even in its severest questionings of the nineteenth century a certain balance and moderation, a certain breadth of knowledge and sympathy, and so seem an advance and not a retrogression.

Attempting to distinguish between tradition and what he called "standards", throughout his life he clung to such terms as "modern" and "experimental". And his reward was to be damned by every scribbling insect in America as a reactionary, a religious dogmatist, and a belated survivor of the "genteel tradition". Even the shrewd and brilliant Mencken, whose verbal felicity was Babbitt's delight, fell into this error as to both Babbitt and the Humanist movement.

On the other hand Mencken was not altogether wrong in accusing Babbitt of sympathy with the ultra-negative Puritan ethics. Babbitt of course would have been the first to deny the vile Manichaean error of holding all material pleasures to be sinful; he was by no means a hater of wine, and the present writer appreciatively remembers a certain delicate Anjou which he selected one evening on the Left Bank. But so deep was his distrust of the least suspicion of excess that there was just a crumb of truth in Mencken's jest that the Humanist "would have been a better man if he had drunk four times as much between the ages of twenty and forty and had brought a few head of poor working girls to shame and Hell"!

Since he himself so emphasized the rôle of the imagination, one wonders why he did not realize the aridity of a life lived in accordance with his "ethical will", entirely without divine guidance and felt almost entirely as an "inner check" on doing what one wanted to do.

But when such reservations have been duly recorded, the fact remains that his masterly analysis of modernism made him perhaps the greatest of American teachers. After a quarter of a century, one still vividly recalls the absorbing interest, almost the excitement, of his lectures. Into the austere and bare Harvard lecture room there would walk powerfully a strongly-built, slightly awkward, six-foot man, his hair brown turning to grey, his eyes a light grey-blue —always brilliant, usually tranquil, but capable of blazing. His earlier pictures show him magnificently handsome, but even when the writer first knew him his face was already deeply furrowed by thought and by his unceasing war of ideas, the face of a man too studious for perfect bodily health. Hardly had his clear, carefully controlled, but vibrant voice made itself heard than one sat bolt upright in the realization that here was a master-anatomist of the whole modernist menagerie. How perfectly he knew each of those great, queer but powerful beasts, the modernist ideas, how convincingly he set forth the origin, growth, and present shape of each. How admirably he described their skill in concealing themselves, or in appearing innocent while stalking their prey. And how he dissected them all, showing their powerful muscles, their great fangs, and their sacs of poison. If anyone doubted his teaching, the doubter had only to look about him in order to appreciate its truth; to open almost any newspaper was, and is, to see the spiritual children of Rousseau everywhere striking at the classical and Christian traditions that have made and still sustain our high but imperilled culture. To hear him was to understand the modern world.

In his astonishing power of understanding and analyzing his enemy, his skill in diagnosing the modernist disease, lies his unique importance.

Like not a few of the great fighters throughout history—Napoleon, for instance, or the great Pope Gregory VII whose last words were "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile"—Irving Babbitt died feeling that he had failed. And yet few teachers have had a greater effect. Not only the American universities but American letters and therefore American life were stirred by him. Though he did not reverse the trend of modern thought, certainly he deflected it not a little, and set a new, vigorous flood tide to swelling up under the scummy surface of the stale modernist backwater. For he made firm and numerous disciples. If on the positive side his doctrine omitted so much that doubtless—as the present writer has said in another place—his Humanists will never be more than Auxiliaries skirmishing usefully on the flanks of the great legions of a returning Christendom; nevertheless when our civilization has succeeded in reintegrating itself he will prove not the least of the reconstructors of order.

Science and Religion

Hilaire Belloc

There is an issue set between science and religion; that is, a conflict. On this, modern men have no doubt. Now what is that issue? We must try and define it or we cannot deal with it.

There is no conflict between two abstract conceptions which may be labelled, the one "Science", the other "Religion". If we mean by "Science" the body of ascertained and measurable physical things, and by "Religion" a sentiment of awe towards something adored and the acceptation of moral commands recognized by all men through the conscience, the two sets of ideas can hardly conflict, because they are not in touch with one another. It is true that the body of ascertained physical things may include facts—such as madness—which preclude freewill and therefore deny morals where these facts apply; but as between the vague sentiment to which men attach the word "Religion" in general, and a body of ascertained physical facts, there is no issue.

But a conflict arises at once when we attach to religion a particular meaning including certain affirmations in contradiction to ascertained physical facts, or when we mean by "Science", not the body of ascertained physical facts but a whole method of regarding cause and effect and the nature of the world. Of the first form of conflict the most obvious is the conflict between an historical affirmation imposed by some religion and an ascertained fact contradictory of that affirmation. For instance, if a man's religion includes the affirmation that man first appeared on earth six thousand years ago, there is a mass of ascertained fact which makes this statement so improbable that it may be called impossible. Of the second form of conflict, the most obvious example is the denial by the scientists (in practice) of miracle, that is, of interruption in the sequence of observed physical cause and effect.

But the real issue lies not in some logical differences of this kind, but between two opposing moods, from which proceed (and which are partly caused by them) two opposing methods of attaining Reality; of discovering Truth; of Believing. For when modern men say, "Science says this," they mean by "Science", not the body of ascertained fact but a whole method of arriving at truth, and what is more, a whole state of mind inimical to another state of mind, also existing in the modern world. They mean "the scientific spirit" as opposed to that other spirit, or mood, which may best be called "the religious spirit". Between these two there is indeed a conflict, and it will act with increasing violence until the one or the other conquers, or until the two separate so thoroughly as to dominate separate sections of mankind.

The scientific spirit, then, relies on the authority of certain dogmas. These dogmas scientists rarely explain or even attempt to base upon reason. The scientist takes them for granted and is angry to hear any contradiction of them. The first and most important of these dogmas is the unity or self-sufficiency of the material universe and therefore the immutability of sequence in cause and effect. The second dogma is that the only form of proof certainly acceptable to the reason of man is proof through things measurable, proof capable of repetition and therefore of test by experience. Truth thus ascertained (says the scientific spirit) is certain; all other affirmations are negligible. Such is the Authority from which the Scientific Spirit derives its creed.

The Religious Spirit, on the other hand, relies on a personal judgement whereby it accepts the authority of an Institution, a book, or a spiritual intuition. Its conclusions are not subject to any universal test, as are those of the scientific spirit. It says, "This Institution is holy and clearly speaks with a Divine voice" or "This book contains all important truth" or "I once experienced this or that within. Such an experience stands fast and nothing external can overthrow it".

Now as between these two, since there is conflicting authority, there is conflicting method; the scientific spirit deals with a number of isolated phenomena, and as it proceeds in its investigation, sets out on a number of divergent lines. It produces the specialist who is not to be contradicted but who cannot coordinate his results with other specialists, save at the very beginning of his journey. The religious spirit on the other hand relies on a general judgement. The first deals in what may be called differentials, an indefinitely large and increasing number of separately acquired truths. The second deals with integration. The first tends to the error of confusing hypothesis with fact. The second tends to strict deduction from what it is sure of, and therefore the error of deducing an apparently certain conclusion from insufficient premises.

An example of the first error was the affirmation of Natural Selection as the agent of growth. It was but an hypothesis; common sense could see that it was not at work in the real world (an acorn does not become an oak by natural selection) and also that it was in contradiction with the first laws of arithmetic: for with every succeeding generation selective advantage diminishes in geometrical proportion. An example of the second form of error is the statement that because men are born equal, therefore each is equally fitted to decide upon affairs of state.

The quarrel between these two moods, (1) religious appreciation or apprehension, doctrines appealing to the revelation of conscience or the authority which conscience has discovered to be supreme, and (2) doctrines derived from the unproved postulates of the Scientific Spirit, spreads, as time proceeds, throughout all the activities of human life. For example, the good of the body is a thing appreciable to all and measurable by all, the physical facts in connection with it can be affirmed without hesitation and receive universal acceptance. Thus, physical pain is an evil, whatever relieves it must therefore be a good. The scientific spirit tends in this particular department to the limitation of childbearing, to the painless murder of those suffering from a painful and incurable disease.

There is no doubt whatever on the facts. They who maintain that pain must be borne, though avoidable, and that life is sacred, rely upon some authority not subject to immediate physical and universally accepted experiment. Each sort of man is equally certain of his position; each must become the mortal enemy of the other; for each is inevitably compelled to combat the activity of the other as being something abominable. He who defends the thesis that we must, for spiritual reasons, submit to pain and permit others to suffer it, is abominable to the scientific spirit. He who would put to death the incurable, sterilize the unfit, sacrifice traditional morals in the effort to relieve pain, or raise the average of health, is, to his religious opponent, diabolical.

As with this example, so with all the others. To the scientific spirit marriage is a contract, necessarily tending to be more and more easily terminable at will. To the religious spirit marriage is a sacrament; desecrated if it be reduced to a mere contract like other terminable human contracts. To the scientific spirit in history, the document is conclusive, tradition and our common sense are negligible. To the religious spirit the whole known nature of man is called in as witness to fact, and the document is always suspect and weak compared with that integration. To the scientific spirit positive affirmation upon beauty and the plastic arts or upon morals is absurd. To the religious spirit such affirmation is the upholding of essential and central truth.

I have said that the conflict is certain to increase. It will increase in area and in violence. Those who, from a weakness of soul, like to believe that there can be a reconciliation between such opposites have not considered the nature of the case. Those who believe that the battle is already won, do not understand their opponents. They are under-estimating their enemies. In this country, with much the greater part of men today, or at least with much the greater part of men who think clearly and closely upon these affairs, the battle does seem at least three-quarters won by the scientific spirit, and the remainder of the action will be no more than the "cleaning up" which follows successful assault.

I make no doubt that the future, when we consider Western civilization as a whole, will gravely disappoint this view. The religious spirit has begun its counter-offensive. On the ultimate effect of this I will prophesy nothing. But that such a reaction is now in progress—and increasingly formidable—should be apparent to anyone who can look beyond the boundaries of his own nation.

A View of the Whole South

ALLEN TATE

TO THE question: What is the South? it were better not to wait for an answer. For unless one asks it in a soliloquy that can dictate its own reply, one is likely to hear: The South is Uncle Sam's other province. That is the answer that one gets, by and large, out of the enormous symposium edited by Professor W. T. Couch, of the University of North Carolina, and published under the misleading title, *Culture in the South.** I say misleading because culture is nowhere clearly understood in all the thirty-one extremely interesting and valuable essays by as many authors; unless culture be the purchasing-power to buy the latest manufactured articles. It must be remembered that the writers herein on social and economic subjects are mostly sociologists and economists, for whom culture is likely to be the table and the chart. Be that as it may, what picture of the South do we get out of their composite labours? What picture do they wish to turn it into? These questions come down to the critical one: What kind of society do these men of the New South want?

In this long but all-too-brief discussion of the points of view set forth in *Culture in the South*, the reader will observe one underlying contention: when men say that we have no choice in the kind of social system that we shall get, it being quite "determined" beforehand by history, facts, forces, conditions, we know that what they are really saying is that *they* are determined to give us the kind of system that *they* want. When the ante-bellum planter said that God had ordained slavery, he was saying what Mr. Broadus Mitchell (whom we shall hear again) says when he affirms that industrialism is determined by forces of the immediate past, and is thus inevitable. This kind of determinism, both of the planter and of Mr. Mitchell, must be taken seriously; only we must be careful to keep strictly in mind just what it is they are telling us. Not all the writers in this book say what Mr. Mitchell says, and in order to get a notion of what they think or have found out, I will at once try to summarize the articles, not in order of appearance but by subject-groups:

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* CULTURE IN THE SOUTH, A Symposium by Thirty-one Authors *edited by W. T. Couch* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. 711 pages. $4.00)

1. *Preface.* Professor Couch, the editor, gives his contributors a free hand. Yet he offers in his Preface his own point of view on Southern civilization in an interesting commentary on the recent Agrarian symposium, *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition.* Having been a contributor to that book, I feel that I am able to point out that Professor Couch's criticism of it is based on a misreading of the text. Consider, he says, "the doctrine that the agrarian way of life is essentially different from the industrial, that it is better—or, at least, better for the South, and that it is worthy of being preserved even at the price of economic obscurantism". If economic obscurantism means self-sufficiency for the farmer, a state in which his "purchasing-power" is of interest only to those

who have something, usually useless, to sell him, we plead guilty. But it was nowhere said that Southern agriculture at this moment affords an ideal society to set off against the depravity of industrialism: we said that Southern agriculture might be made into a system in which security and stability could be won in a measure impossible so long as the farmer, fixed in the commercial scheme, remains in economic vassalage to his local merchants and bankers and, in so far as these are vassals to the big bankers and industrialists, to the whole financial system. *Item:* This sensitiveness of the Southern pro-industrialist to the disappearance of purchasing-power on the farm, or, put the other way, their dislike of independent agriculture, is symptomatic of the general capitalist imperialism towards the Market. The expanding Market —and here the Marxists, for instance John Strachey in *The Coming Struggle for Power*, are right—is the cornerstone of industrial capitalism; it must expand not only towards greater consumption of commodities, but towards an unlimited supply of labour that it can buy at its own price; therefore the Southern industrialist is greatly concerned for the farmer's purchasing-power if indeed he cannot persuade him to leave the farm for the factory, where he will play the double rôle of consumer and cheap labourer. There is, in this process, the concealed joker that may wreck capitalism—destruction of the consumer in the act of cheapening labour. *Item:* It must be said that neither the editor nor his contributors, even when the latter are critical of the industrialization of the South, are aware of the plight of world capitalism; nor is there any critical perception of its possible alternatives. These men are still catching up with the North, nor do they ask whether there is now anything in the North to catch up with. The reader will judge whether, and in what sense, the South may be a backward region.

2. *Literature, education, journalism, folk-lore.* Ten essays cover these subjects; they exhibit a high quality of learning and judgement, and they are indispensable to future study of these fields in the South. John D. Allen's analysis of Southern journalism divides newspaper opinion into three camps—the New South Toryism of industry; the Old South Toryism of the Confederacy, in which sentiment on the one hand has no connection, on the other, with economic interests which easily merge with those of rising industry; and Liberalism. Mr. Allen is both fearless and astute, but like the majority of the authors of this book, he fails to see that Liberalism has no programme and that, however brave and pious its criticism may be, it is ultimately futile. Professor Edgar W. Knight contributes an informative article on educational problems and "progress"; but here progress means bigger and better schools. H. Clarence Nixon, of Tulane University, surveys the colleges and universities, to the conclusion that a great Southern University is necessary, most of the existing institutions being timid and subservient to the new industrial money of which they have felt considerable need: this is one of the best essays in the book. Yet none of the writers in this field attempts a thorough criticism of the New Education. Arthur Palmer Hudson writes about white folk-songs; Guy B. Johnson about the folk-songs of

the Negro; and B. A. Botkin writes a more general essay on "Folk and Folklore". These articles, based on the latest results of research, are of capital interest and importance: yet again the relation of this material to the meaning of "culture" is nowhere suspected except at moments by Mr. Botkin: culture presumably remains something that you buy with money, possibly from Europe. Mr. John Donald Wade offers us, under the title "Southern Humor", the most distinguished piece of writing in the volume. His thesis that Southern humour rises in the inability of the Southerner, since Appomattox, to take any abstractions or programmes seriously, may indeed be seriously disputed, unless Mr. Wade means ideas that are not related to his immediate life. William Cabell Greet has written the first systematic study of Southern speech that I have seen—another essay of importance. One of the ablest and most discriminating essays on the general culture of the South is Professor Jay B. Hubbell's "Southern Magazines"; he is just and detached throughout; and his conclusions will be the starting-point of future study in this field, as well as advice and warning to the aspiring founder of magazines in the South. In "The Trend of Literature" Mr. Donald Davidson (ill at ease among his Liberal neighbours) puts his finger on a fundamental *malaise* of the modern Southern writer—his inability, for various reasons, to look upon his society as a normal manifestation of human life, with the consequent confusion of purpose that keeps his style and point of view on the defensive or satirical plane. Mr. Davidson, justly I think, makes exception in favour of the poets, who, however, standing outside this *Zeitgeist*, are unread.

His essay brings to a head the whole cultural problem of the South, a problem that few of the other contributors seem aware of: that the basis of culture is a dignified local life resting upon the common people, who take all the props from under a genuine culture as soon as they are deprived of independence; hence the complete industrialization of the South, even if the perfect bungalow and kitchen sink of the industrial apologists were possible, would destroy the last stronghold of culture in the United States.

3. *Manners and Society*. Miss Josephine Pinckney examines the social changes of the last generation, as these changes have affected domestic manners and customs; she concludes that the South will not be quickly transformed; for the deep-rooted leisureliness of Southern life is a concrete reality against which abstract benefits like quick wealth and power will break at last in vain. Miss Pinckney's essay is full of shrewd and sensitive observation, not the least interesting of which is her remark that Prohibition with its corn liquor did more than any other thing to lower the social tone of the upper class of the South. Mr. Clarence E. Cason, in "Middle Class and Bourbon", tries to discover in the Old South a middle-class, but I think with not very much success, since his notion of a middle-class is a number of people with a "middling" amount of money and power. Again the most advanced Southern "iconoclasm", *i.e.*, the brave explosion of the mythical Colonel, commits itself to that least desirable form of provincialism which consists in seeing itself in isolation both historical and economic. For a middle class is that class which, pro-

ducing nothing, buys cheap and sells dear, getting a rake-off from both producer and consumer; the Morgans, for example, being middle-class, regardless of their wealth and power. (This provincial failure to see the South as the last battle-ground of a conflict that began in Europe with the economic changes growing out of the Reformation, the conflict between producer and *entrepreneur*, between the land and manipulating capital, not only blinds Mr. Cason to the social realities of the South; it confuses the outlook of the larger number of the authors of economic articles in the book.) Mr. J. Wesley Hatcher's article, "Appalachian America", presents the entire social, religious, domestic, and economic life of the "mountaineer"; it is the best thing ever written on this subject and it ought to be expanded into a book. Two factors have prevented a proper understanding of the highlander: the old prejudice of the low-country Southern gentry, and modern industrial exploitation. Industry has advertised the mountaineer as a debased creature whose life deserves no respect but to whom, for some mysteriously humanitarian reason, should be given the improvements of the bathroom and the kitchen sink. As far as the highlands are concerned, says Mr. Hatcher, "the solution of the economic and social problems of the people is not to be found in coercing them into the slums and bread-lines of our industrial centres, but rather in the adjustment of the educational programme and methods to the task of developing the remaining resources in a manner that will give the richest and fullest life possible". Given the all-pervasive faith in "education", Mr. Hatcher is not to be blamed for missing the key to the difficulty:

economic autonomy. And this problem is political, not "educational", as we shall see when we come to the essay on Southern politics.

4. *Business and Industry*. This is a depressing exhibit. Professor Claudius Murchison hymns the courage of the Southern business man who broke away from "inertia" and "old habits"—to do what? The real answer is: to wreck the South and Southern agriculture, as his *confrère* in the North has wrecked the whole country. Again there is no inkling of the world condition of business; it is assumed that everything is going to get better. This is a perfect example of academic timidity before the industrial masters; for the bankers and industrialists, the real if temporary masters of the South, keep the college, and the professors keep the peace. Let us pass on. "The Industrial Worker", by Harriet L. Herring, is a competent analysis of the position of the industrial worker, a position that is in urgent need of reform; but there is no hint of the real source of reform, which apparently is to proceed from the sheer charity of the money power. This article has the negative defect of the book as a whole—lack of historical and political sense, and this is a lack of realism. Mr. George Sinclair Mitchell analyzes the relation of Southern industrial labour to organization: until the Southern worker is organized he will not get a fair hearing in the courts. This is good sense: the labour movement in the South should be supported, but it must not be supposed that it can achieve the solution to the real labour problem, which is wage-slavery. The hard plight of labour becomes manifest in Mr. Bruce Crawford's article, "The

Coal Miner", a plain tale of corruption, ruthless exploitation, and insane competition. Mr. Crawford offers a brief review of the Harlan war, and if to this review we add the historical background of the mountaineer already sketched by Mr. Hatcher, we begin to understand the causes of the miner's plight. Mr. Crawford sees the solution to the problem in socialist reform; Mr. Hatcher, in local independence. I think the latter solution is the correct one; for labour legislation is never radical but only ameliorative, the worker remaining, for all his improved condition, a wage-slave. (It may be remarked that in this country, North and South, where there is enough land to support a huge population, wage-slavery could be easily avoided, as it cannot so easily be in England where there is no land this side the colonies for the worker to fall back upon.) On the question of labour legislation Professor Charles W. Pipkin tells a story that may well astonish the optimist of Southern industry: the concessions to labour, in the form of child-labour laws, old-age pensions, and workman's compensation, though numerically considerable, are actually so slight as to cripple the operator little if at all. And these concessions will continue to be made, in partial and ineffective form, as a propagandist sop to the worker and the humanitarian public: the operator knows the procedure to be harmless, for he alone holds the *political power*. In the face of this circumstance, Mr. Broadus Mitchell's panegyric of Southern industrialism rings out like the cry of blind Pew in the night. I have tried for years to understand what is wrong with Mr. Mitchell. There being, he says, no Old Southern culture that he "can see", it would be well to get more factories in the South. Industrialism is not only the superior economic structure for society; it is also "determined" economically. It is beautiful to observe the forces of history at the service of Mr. Mitchell's desires; I envy him. Now the commentators on Southern agriculture agree that from two-thirds to three-fourths of the thirty-five million inhabitants of the Southern States live on the land. The farmers are in wretched condition; but this does not concern Mr. Mitchell; he can do nothing for them. Although labour troubles in the South have been grievous, they have not been grievous enough. We must catch up with the world; we must completely industrialize the South so that we shall have a problem that must be solved in socialist terms. There is a moral imperative upon us to do this. This point of view, I gather from certain intimations *passim* in Mr. Mitchell's essay, is "realistic"; that of the Agrarians, backward-looking and sentimental.

5. "Also There is Politics", by Mr. George Fort Milton, author of a brilliant life of Andrew Johnson, is the sole essay on that subject. It is very nearly the sole mention of it in the entire book. The trouble with Southern politics, says Mr. Milton, is the Solid South; there is no respectable opposition party. What is Mr. Milton's own view of the State? We do not know. The parties do not have to stand for any view of the State, for Mr. Milton knows, as we know, that the real political masters are the bankers and industrialists. (This knowledge I attribute to Mr. Milton; he does not authorize me to do so.) So we get opposition opposing opposition, while the money power rules.

This I understand to be the perfect formula of Southern Liberalism, if we add thereto the tiger's chaudron of pious zeal for reform and progress. The State governments, says Mr. Milton, have of late years been greatly reformed in economy and efficiency; yet, alas, "progress" in public works and highways has provided opportunities for graft and corruption of the direst sort. There is this, of course, on the one hand; there is that unfortunately on the other. The donkey, political thought, starves to death between the bales of hay, doing justice to them both, and hoping for the best.

6. *Agriculture*. This is by far the ablest group of essays in the book. Professor Rupert B. Vance writes a geographical survey of Southern soil, climate, and natural resources; he recommends regional planning—an excellent recommendation that ought to be the basis of restoring Southern life. Who will do the planning? It is a political question; it is not probable that a committee of high-minded professors will be appointed to the task. Professor A. E. Parkins offers us a valuable descriptive and statistical account of farming in the South; it is a chaos that apparently requires chiefly more efficient machinery to bring it to order—in "harmony with modern commercial agriculture". Here, again, there is no broad critical sense of the relation of farming to industry; commercial farming, in the face of its collapse, is taken as an inevitable good. The best of these articles, the best article on economics in the whole book, is Mr. Clarence Poe's "The Farmer and His Future". Mr. Poe clearly and concisely urges two reforms that contain

the solution not only to the farm problem in the South but to the problem of labour in the city: he urges, first, diversification of crops, particularly towards clovers and grasses for cattle raising, a "crop" that will not only keep farm labour employed and paid in the winter off-season, but will enrich the soil for plant-crops; and he urges, secondly, as an indispensable basis for this reform, a programme of self-sufficiency for the farm, in which the farmer's own living comes off the land first of all. It is perfect in its simplicity; it is not urged by the other contributors for a reason that I have already pointed out: industrial capitalism wants to sell the farmer *everything he uses*, subsistence agriculture signalling a shrinkage of the Market; and the farmer's independence represents also a shrinkage of the Market where cheap labour may be bought. Until recently we were undergoing the same process that England suffered a hundred years ago—dispossession of the farmer who must necessarily go to the city to supply cheap labour for industry. (The probable effect of Mr. Poe's "agrarian" programme upon industrial labour I shall indicate in a moment.) With this group of essays I have placed Professor Den Hollander's "The Tradition of 'Poor Whites' ", a revolutionary study of the history of Southern social classes. Den Hollander shows that the fiction of a small number of great planters set above a vast horde of miserable peckerwoods and clay-eaters was the invention of Northern prejudice, one more way of discrediting the South before the Civil War: the great majority of slaveless men were yeomen subsistence farmers, whom the upheaval of the war threw as tenants upon the big plantations. Yet the fiction has been taken over by the modern Liberal and industrialist in the South; it rationalizes his rejection of the "past"; and it gives moral colour to his "uplift" programme for the poor-white coming into his factory. Here the familiar process has been at work: industry crushes agriculture, dispossesses the small farmer, and then works itself into a moral fervour over his plight; it then rescues the miserable victim of wicked plantation exploitation by enticing him into the factory village (bathroom and kitchen sink), where, as a wage-slave, he receives the finishing touches of the servitude that tenantry began. It is worth remarking here that, able as these essays are, none of them offers a programme for the evils of the tenant system, though these evils all through the book are acutely pointed out and analyzed. Why is this? Simply because it is a dangerous political question: it would involve a programme to make agriculture independent and prosperous at the expense of industry's monopoly of the commodity and labour markets.

7. *The Negro.* Another dangerous question ably discussed in a long article by the editor, Professor Couch. Although Professor Couch sets forth accurately and fearlessly the economic, political, and social condition of the Negro, he too has no programme for the improvement of this race. His zeal is noble, at times lachrymose, but it is not precisely responsible to shed tears unless one is prepared to do something for the pitiable object. Professor Couch is aware that the Negro problem overlaps the white-tenant problem; that both problems are economic problems; but not that the economic problem is a political problem.

There is the other problem of the reformers who are anxious to have Negroes sit by them on street-cars, but are loath to devise a programme whereby they may purchase land; nor have I any sympathy with reformers who are agitated about social equality, for there has never been social equality anywhere, there never will be, nor ought there to be. Every class and race should get what it earns by contributing to civilized life. (For that reason the American capitalist class, having added nothing to civilization, is an inferior class.) There will be no practical solution to the race question (as a problem it is inherently insoluble and ought to be, like all social problems in ultimate terms) until Southern agriculture, by means of politico-economic action, recovers its independence; that alone will destroy the lynching-tension between the races by putting both races on an independent footing. Liberals like Professor Couch, who find no "justice" in Anglo-Saxon domination, have no precise picture of what should take its place: let us have "justice" and the devil take the hindmost. It is not a question of sentimental justice. I argue it this way: the white race seems determined to rule the Negro race in its midst; I belong to the white race; therefore I intend to support white rule. Lynching is a symptom of weak, inefficient rule; but you can't destroy lynching by *fiat* or social agitation; lynching will disappear when the white race is satisfied that its supremacy will not be questioned in social crises. To tempt the Negro to question this supremacy without first of all giving him an economic basis is sentimental and irresponsible. Since a majority of the Negroes are in the South, and a majority of these on the land, it is a matter of simple realism to begin the improvement of their condition as farmers. Improvement here depends upon the general improvement of agriculture, upon the rediscovery of the agrarian economy (which the Negro has never quite forgotten), the ground of a prosperity that should lead to his purchase of land. If abstract agitation against white supremacy would give way to concrete programmes for the Negro, a great deal could be done for him; but not until then.

8. *Lawlessness*. Professor H. C. Brearley, in "The Pattern of Violence", has written an invaluable study of crime in the Southern States. Mob violence and homicide are, of course, the two types of crime chiefly under discussion. Professor Brearley rightly places the origin of quick shooting in the South in the feudal spirit that the plantation system perpetuated in America. This spirit to a large extent survives, but the code of honour that once gave it dignity, prescribing the kinds of grievance that justify killing and setting limits to the modes, has disappeared; we get plain murder in place of the duel. One may conclude, on the basis of Professor Brearley's argument, that the feudal conception of personal integrity, while it remains, has been overlaid with a middle-class social pattern. In 1878 *The Code of Honor*, an astonishingly late defense of the formal duel, published in Charleston, asserted that "the leading and most rancorous enemies of the Code of Honor are the materialistic Puritan sceptics". The code of honour set little value upon mere human life; it tended to dignify life with a rigid conception of its ideal integrity, without which it is worthless. (It may

be remarked that the modern business man is not sensitive to attacks upon his ethical methods if they are profitable.) Of lynching Professor Brearley has no "explanation", but it has steadily declined since 1889, that is until 1930. The recent outburst of lynching in the South, which is not noticed in this article, is probably due to three factors: Communist agitation, which deludes the Negro into believing that he can better his condition by crime; general economic fear and instability taking the form of mob violence; and outside interference in the trials of accused Negroes. Professor Brearley points out that were it not for the new violence of industrial warfare, the end of which cannot yet be seen, there would be a sound hope for the disappearance of mob violence in the South.

9. *Miscellaneous.* Five articles remain; they round out the comprehensive scope of an invaluable and fascinating book. Dr. Edwin McNeill Poteat, Jr., writes a brief history of religion in the South, forecasting towards the end of his paper its future. Southern religion, he says, is still on the whole deeply conservative, adhering, in spite of developments elsewhere of liberal Protestantism, to the strict separation of the natural and the supernatural realms. There are, for example, in the South only seven per cent of the American Unitarian Churches and thirteen per cent of the two thousand Christian Science Churches. Fundamentalism, fortunately (this is not Dr. Poteat's view) still reigns. The South as a whole remains stolidly sceptical of the social mission of the church, putting its emphasis upon individual salvation.

There is indeed a great need of religious rejuvenation in the South. Dr. Poteat hopes that it will take a Liberal direction: the historical background of his discussion is unexceptionable, but his plea for the future savours slightly of rotarian Protestantism. Mrs. Ula Milner Gregory's essay on "The Fine Arts" has the hopeful spirit and a little more than the usual vulgarity of female missionary zeal: "Evidence of a country's love of painting is generally found in the number and size and quality of the country's museums." Again: "The art schools of the South constitute another important factor in the improvement of the art situation." On the whole this essay is evidence of the disorder of modern society that permits well-meaning persons to convert art into a "cause" and to devote their lives to something that they do not understand. Mr. Allen H. Eaton, however, discussing "The Handicrafts", brings to that subject a distinctly superior insight; he is aware that the "higher" arts historically stem from the home-crafts; he pleads for the preservation of the remains of these arts in the South. Foundations, money, museums will exterminate them; their sole hope of survival lies in the restoration of the agricultural, rural society and the dignity of local life. (The Bayeux tapestry was not produced for a museum or subsidized by a foundation.) In one of the best descriptive essays in the volume, Mr. Edd Winfield Parks outlines the rise and position of the city in Southern life. He warns us that generalizations are difficult, that urbanization may be only skin-deep; yet the commercial and banking city has come to occupy, in Southern life and economy, a place similar to that occupied by the North before 1860.

In "The Southern Heritage", Professor Charles W. Ramsdell reviews the entire history of the South; the discussion is intelligent and informed; but his conclusion has some of the facile characteristics of Charles A. Beard's tripod: there is the mechanical prophecy of more and better machine civilization, but not much effort at historical insight.

This brings to a close my summary of a book that is epoch-making in its field: it will doubtless remain for a generation a point of departure for future discussion. Although Uncle Sam's other province is amenable to no definition as a living fact, it remains by will or inertia outside the essence of Americanism. The question of the South for the future can be put into simple terms: Since the great industrial system of the North has been checked in its "progress" and must retrench for a new start, or even face a permanent stabilization at some point short of infinite profit and efficiency, what is left for the Liberal generation of the South to imitate? It can no longer imitate the North of the last decade which has ceased to exist: catching up with the North no longer means unlimited expansion of industry. Mr. Broadus Mitchell, I believe, stands alone in wishing to bring the Southern factory and financial system to the chaos that has overtaken the North; this moral heroism, which finds a good-in-itself in solving the appalling difficulties of industrialism, will leave Mr. Mitchell's weaker contemporaries cold. But the writing is plain on the wall: catching up with the North has come definitely to mean restriction of industrial competition and a resulting stabilization of the system. If the Southern industrial system were stabilized at this moment, the South would remain a predominantly agricultural region.

Now what is the obvious, common-sense moral of this situation? It is that the sixty per cent of the population on the land must receive the first attention, not because, being noble farmers, they deserve it, but because the well-being of the State requires that its foundation, which is production on the land, must be sound. Our "realistic" friends, the Liberals, get history to tell them what it is possible to do; it is invariably what they themselves want done. And what they want done is precisely what the drift of events will bring them. The morality of economic determinism is a kind of Pecksniffery that is at last intolerable: it is a rationalization of industrial power that has killed the political impulse.

The weakest discussion in "Culture in the South" is the essay on politics, but it is not Mr. Milton's weakness alone; his temerity in accepting that subject merely exposes him to an attack which the book as a whole equally deserves. Professor Couch in his Preface likewise betrays the general paralysis of the political sense. Without the new industrial wealth, says he, we could not have the universities; without the universities we could not study the problems of industrial wealth. I leave that syllogism without comment. Southern industrialism is the tin can rattling on the tail of the academic dog. And what shall we do about this magnificent piece of historical commentary: "This position [of the modern Agrarians] is a long step backward from that of the agrarians of the nineties who held, in general, that both industry and agriculture could be and must be organized to serve legitimate human purposes." The Populists held it very much "in general"; and many Englishmen held "in general" that Mary of Scotland's head should not be cut off, but it is a sad fact that it was. The Southern Liberal can *hold* almost anything for *legitimate human purposes* which presumably will be announced some day after the social scientists have *studied* society long enough to find out what they are.

Meanwhile the legitimate human purpose of the Southern farmer, tenant and landlord, is to get enough to eat in the first place, and in the second, having been fed, to dictate the political terms of his well-being. It is a simple matter of fact that the social-science approach to the farm is actuated by the desire, however unconscious, to teach the farmer how to be a good consumer of industrial commodities; this is called improving him and getting him into the stream of progress. Although Professor Couch weeps for the poor-white, he proposes, so far as I can see, to do nothing but study him.

There is a plain programme for the South, and it is a programme for all regions of western culture where the majority of the people are on the land and where there is enough common patriotism left to grapple with the future of orderly civilization. Either by legislation or by revolution, in those regions where the land supports most of the people, the power must pass to those people. The basis of this programme for the South is contained in Mr. Clarence Poe's article in this book. To Mr. Poe's suggestions should be added the regional programme of Professor Vance: future Southern industries should rise where the raw materials are most easily available. It is an absurd criticism of the Agrarians to suppose that they would destroy the factories; it is rather that the people must be allowed to dictate what they want to have made in the factory. Moreover, if primary subsistence were the basis of the farm, the land would not only be able to dictate its factory needs, it would be in a position to thwart the factory-migration to the places of cheap labour. If in the South there were —as there is in France—a sound subsistence-farming, the cheap labour market of the capitalist would tend to narrow; his profits would decrease, his political power diminish; and the factory worker, hard to lure from the land, and threatening momently to return to it, could dictate his own terms. Whatever the solution to the problem of wage-slavery may be in the North, or in hopelessly industrialized nations like England, the agrarian solution most easily presents itself to the South. It is a single solution for the farm and the factory worker: prosperity on the land—which does not mean a big dole from industry (*i.e.*, government) to be collected into the pocket of industry again. It means the technique of making a living on the land.

The enormous difficulties of such a programme are apparent in every essay in "Culture in the South"; yet eventually the programme cannot be so difficult as none at all. That is the dilemma of the South: shall we drift Liberally or shall we take the present situation in hand? With notable exceptions, this notable symposium proposes to study and drift. As far as "culture" is concerned, few of the contributors suspect the existence of anything better than the culture of the foundation, the class-room, and the museum: to this extent, perhaps, culture in the South has been middle-westernized. To possess a concrete image of a living society in which certain civilized qualities may be enjoyed by all classes is to be cultivated; without this, abstract improvements and benefits reduce a people to the barbarism of learning a new technique of living day by day. Agriculture in the past has supplied us with our civilization, and the civilized qualities that survive come remotely from the land. This sense of the history of America, and distantly of Europe, has almost disappeared; the parochialism of the industrial era has taken its place. This latest voice from the South shows, I fear, that she is backward with a vengeance.

The Protestant Garrison in America

R. L. Burgess

THE educated American of the old stock does not like to use racial and religious terms in discussing politics. He does not wish to be rated as a Klansman, sullen and bigoted. But his fear that it is impolite to mention Jews and Catholics as such in political comment has been recently alleviated, although in a somewhat disturbing way. For he now realizes that he must label as Protestant or as English or North-European many ideas of his own which in the past he had hoped were truly universal, not of narrowly racial or religious origin.

At this point the Early American, if he may call himself such, perceives that he is a member of a sort of Protestant Garrison in America, made up on the whole of the descendants of those who came here first, and who are making an effort to rule and mold a Republic which they have fallen into the habit of considering as peculiarly their own. He does not like this. It makes him seem part of a blind and selfish biological process rather than the exponent of universally beneficent ideals. His belief in those ideals has until very lately been earnest and naïve. He had been touched deeply by what James Truslow Adams calls "the American dream". He had hoped that America forever would be a refuge for oppressed minorities, that the Goddess of Liberty would continue to ask no questions, but would enlighten the world always with an ideal above race and independent of religion, free from all those rooted hates and age-long obduracies which he finds so unlovely in the Old World. And to the Early American the doctrine of separation of church and state has been very dear: it is especially annoying to confess that the American Republic is, in a way, but one denomination of a specific religious sect.

Whether he likes it or not, however, and with whatever finicky qualifications he as an individual may euphemize, the American of the old stock finds that his group as a whole has already begun to act with considerable solidarity and determination. In 1924 we restricted immigration of Jews and Catholics, giving preference to folk of North-European and Protestant background. In 1928 the Old World, watching from the sidelines, decided that we would not seriously consider giving the Presidency to a Catholic. In 1932 we scouted the Fascist doctrine of a corporate coercive state, a doctrine ultimately Catholic in philosophy and origin; we ignored the Jewish dogma of economic monism now prevalent in Russia. Instead, we resumed that path of pragmatic liberalism stemming from Protestant tradition which we had been treading with Woodrow Wilson when interrupted by war.

The Early American who prides himself on being not only a good citizen but a loyal member of the brotherhood of man finds himself, then, in a predicament. He had thought he was a mind and a soul, and he wakes up to discover that he is a microbe, one of a colony of a certain species bent on pushing back those of other kinds. Is there any escape for him?

By what path can he find his way back to a course along which he can proceed in the faith that he is breathing an air liberating, universal, and inspiring?

II

Most Americans, confronted with this dilemma, either dogmatize or recant. That is, despite the special racial and religious origins of Americanism, they proclaim it absolutely and eternally valid; or they abjure their traditions and declare all peculiarly American lore and practice to be archaic, immoral—a disease to be eradicated. Such recantation usually is clothed in communistic terminology, just as the dogmatism tends toward the fascistic.

Dogmatic "Americanism" and fervid recantation are not, however, the only possible solutions of the problem. There is another way out, which one might tentatively call that of Protestant Liberal Pragmatism: one may admit that he is of the Protestant Garrison, that the roots of his habits of thought and practice are in the Reformation; that he must function underlyingly as a mobile and independent Liberal, no matter how many years he may chance to vote one ticket or co-operate with one party; and that in his general mode of approach to all problems he must be tentative, experimental, pluralistic, rather than an absolutist or monist of any sort.

As part of this hacking out of a formula for self-redemption, then, one might resolve not to leave all racial and religious honesty to the Klan. There might be nailed down as an essential element of one's political credo the thought that came to so many Americans during the discussion of the 1924 immigration law, but which some of us refused to accept until long afterwards. This idea was well expressed by John R. Commons:

> We find that our democratic theories and forms of government were fashioned by but one of the many races and peoples which have come within their practical operation. . . . It is the distinctive fact regarding colonial migration that it was Teutonic in blood and Protestant in religion. . . . The Protestant Reformation prepared the hearts of men for the doctrines of political liberty and constitutional government. . . . When once established in England and America we find that other races and peoples, accustomed to despotism and even savagery, and wholly unused to self-government, have been thrust into the delicate fabric.

It is true that our own Protestant forbears in the British Isles supplied some of that "despotism and even savagery". Commons points out that some of the dominant American traits were transmitted to us by immigrants from the original Protestant Garrison which oppressed Catholic Ireland: the advance guard of pioneers in that settling of the West which did so much to mold our tradition was recruited to a great extent from the so-called Scotch-Irish, Protestants planted by James I in Ireland to exploit the natives. And certainly the Jews in Europe have long been subjected to despotism and savagery by men of our stock and tradition as well as by Catholics.

Nevertheless, after all due allowance has been made for the past, the Early Americans can truthfully call themselves Liberals or even Radicals and yet claim they still have something especially cogent to say about this Republic. Part of what they have to say may consist in more frankly calling Jews, Catholics, and Protestants by name. The Klan and the Nazis are not to be headed off by obscurantism. Dogmatic "Americanism", never confessing its racial-religious roots, will not suffice either. Nor will very much be achieved by those hysterical recanters of Protestantism already referred to above, who join the more belated immigrant stocks in denouncing the old America as "Puritan" and in crying out that only Fascism or Communism can save the new America. Surely it is not necessary to evade, nor to dogmatize, nor to recant: we might try encouraging the development of the best traits of all the groups under principles established by the founding group. Those principles remain: democracy, individualism, and federalization of all major tendencies in the commonwealth rather than surrender to them or suppression. Those principles are not sacred, universal, eternal, but had their origin finitely in the Protestant Reformation. The basis of any claim for their rightness in America is not absolute, but pragmatic and relative: folk of Protestant tradition got here first, built the Republic, exemplify its policies, and still outnumber those of other faiths. Liberty and order are best served by reasonable adherence to the general lines of the system as settled by those first comers.

We have already learned much from Jewish and Catholic criticism. Perhaps we shall learn more if we admit the racial and religious origins of our ideas, yet firmly advocate them. We have a tradition that is worth teaching. The Jews, and especially the Russian Jews, have had a training too exclusively economic to enable them to appreciate fully our more normally comprehensive system. The Catholics, and especially the Irish Catholics, have on the other hand experienced a schooling too straitly political to qualify them for that fruitful linkage of political and economic considerations which we call democracy.

In short, it is at least possible that folk of the Protestant Garrison should pluck up the courage to say, in as good-humoured and politic a manner as possible, but firmly: "Jews understand economics. Catholics understand politics. *We* understand both!"

III

The Civil War prevented conflict in this country between Protestants and Irish Catholics from coming to a head, for in that war the Protestants were so busy fighting among themselves as to what newer immigrants, voluntary or enforced, were to be exploited, and in what manner, that they were diverted from the rancours of the incipient feud with the Irish Catholics. Afterwards, the Protestant South had to form its famous alliance with Catholic Tammany. In the Far West, where early there had been hostility to Catholics, difficulties with Chinese and Japanese immigrants soon developed, and the Irish took the lead as spokesmen for the white stock in general. The Smith-McAdoo feud, however, and the South's refusal to vote solidly for a Catholic even when he bore the sacred name of Democrat, reminded us all that the old feeling smouldered, had not been extinguished. The 1924 immigration law, adopted by statesmen who could not too frankly express religious preferences, gave the Irish a large quota on the basis of the 1890 census, although it cut down severely the other

Catholics. Numbers of Irish Catholics have thus continued to come to America. This has strengthened the Catholics, and increased the Protestants' uneasiness. The Irish Free State's drift away from England has also doubtless added to our Protestant Garrison's prejudice against the Irish. All this means that sentimentality about Ireland is not so strong with us as it has been.

For centuries in their homeland the Catholic Irish have, as E. A. Ross puts it, "been engrossed with an old-fashioned problem—that of freeing their country. Meanwhile, the luckier peoples have swept on to ripen their thinking about class relations, industrial organization, and social institutions." The Irish come here, see the hated Anglo-Scotch tribe intrenched in Wall Street, in the South, in the West; they build a machine to resist this dominant group. Solidarity of the Catholic Church makes for the firmness of Tammany's structure. Catholics of other races in America turn for leadership to the Irish. All Catholic races have for centuries watched power shift from their sea in the south of Europe to that northern ocean where Protestantism developed and flourishes: naturally, all the Catholics in America hold together against Protestant exploiters disguised, but disguised very poorly, the Catholics feel, as "Americans".

Americans of the original Protestant stock, facing voters who cast ballots according to race and religion, become, as said above, sceptical about democracy. This is partly because unconsciously they are seeking some more effective method of coercing Catholic immigrant blocs; and partly they echo directly the natural cynicism of Catholic politicians concerning American political ideals. Other elements coalesce with this movement. Of late years, for example, the standardized assaults upon democracy and "Puritanism" have emanated from a Baltimore clique. In Baltimore there is a strong Catholic tradition. There is also a powerful Southern element, of course, and ever since the Civil War the overthrown gentry of the South and their apes have extolled the alleged political superiority of aristocracy to democracy: lately they have learned to substitute the words "moron" or "yokel" for the original terms, "poor white trash" or "hill billy". Also, since Baltimore is an old city of the industrial-financial part of the United States, it has many well-to-do folk who fear radicalism will take hold of the masses. Such persons encourage criticism of democracy and of the "Puritan", that bugaboo of the Catholic or of the renegade Protestant who has a sentimental misconception of the Catholic attitude toward morals.

Political cynicism is not so demoralizing for the Catholics themselves as it is for these renegade Protestants, who of course in denouncing the "Puritan" are fouling the nest of their own origins. Catholic thought in general is marked by a deep-seated dualism which inevitably and almost wholesomely, one might say, emerges as cynicism when the Catholic is in an alien, Protestant environment. The Catholic mind sets up the eternal and the temporal, the absolute and the relative, in violent contrast: in the eternal realm all moves with absolute perfection, and that movement is channeled by the infallible Church; in the temporal realm, when one finds how hard it is to apply eternal dogmas, one does the best one can. In a Catholic country, all the citizens face the same difficulty and achieve mutual easements and strengthenings. But in an alien, Protestant country, the Catholic minority finds especially troublesome this severe contrast of eternal and temporal, and accordingly practical adjustments to political and commercial life are made with a natural cynicism. The very title of one of Mr. Santayana's best known books, *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, embodies this opposition of the excessively attenuate and the mortally crass. If in this suave American philosopher of Spanish Catholic origin is to be discovered urbane sanction of the body's blind searching for its own, in the Irish Catholic politician the cynicism is of course much more crude. And it is still more so in the fulminations of the undergraduate protestant against his native Protestantism and democracy.

This growth of cynicism concerning American and "Puritan" ideas, culminating in a suspicion directed at the entire democratic process, increases the hankering after Fascism. Its ideal is, of course, a corporate state built on the model of the Church of Rome—a glorified Tammany headed by a very exalted sachem indeed. Fascism demands from the citizens an exclusive and archaic type of loyalty, instead of that pluralistic and equable or elastic devotion characteristic of Protestant peoples. Fascism would fixate, in the style of Catholicism, the hierarchy of those socially and economically established. Officially, the Catholic Church cannot sanction the doctrine, because Fascism is Catholicism minus God; fundamentally Catholic in attitude, it yet heretically sets up as its object of worship the nationalist state. And Rome has not forgotten that it was in that rebellion against Catholicism which we call the Reformation that the modern national state was set up.

The success of the modern state in Protestant regions makes ambitious individuals in Catholic countries endeavour to transfer to the state the Catholic obsession for the idea of the eternal, the absolute. The original Catholic social hierarchy was, of course, military-agrarian, or, as we usually say, feudal. But as the result of the forces freed by the Reformation, the national state grew upon the basis of a new group, the middle class, traders and industrialists. This typically Protestant class is now alarmed by the furor raised by the international Jew and his Communism, and also by its own class tendency to dig, as Marx put it, the grave of capitalism: the consequence is that the uneasy Protestant middle class is now somewhat inclined to pay heed to the essentially Catholic doctrine of Fascism. This drift is, paradoxically, as indicated above, accelerated by dread of the very group, the Irish Catholic one, which has indigenous Fascist tendencies. For wherever the Catholic Tammany system prevails, one man is Boss of the entire political structure. This sets the Protestant to scheming for a one-man Boss system of his own.

IV

The Jew has for centuries been denied opportunity to function politically within a nation of his own building. He has had to specialize in economics. Now he is proud of the limitation. He smiles at the Protestant's naïve interest in politics.

Waldo Frank says characteristically in *Our America*: "Of the very few quick minds in America today, the great majority are politically turned . . . a nation of voters. . . . The one door which the Puritan culture did not shut was that of governmental thought. It is a door which most Americans who think at all are wont to take." Our Protestant Garrison, in short, makes money not by direct attention to economics as does the Jew, nor by direct political manipulation as does the Catholic Irishman: but by the indirect and pervasive influence of Protestant political concepts upon economic affairs. The Protestant sets up instinctively that framework of maxim and abstraction which automatically provides him with the best economic opportunity; and he usually, as we all know, speaks of the profitable transaction in self-approving moral terms. This causes the Catholic Irish to call us hypocrites; it makes the Jew feel that we are stupid. The Irishman notes how fatedly our "morality" works in the direction of larger profits for the Protestant Garrison. The Jew considers our much advertised individualism, our characteristic federation of large, loose, freely moving personalities, as much less efficient than the swarming, close-knit union of family and tribe to which the Jews have been habituated by centuries of dwelling, in alien lands, within the tight little ghetto. Consequently Waldo Frank says: "Everywhere it is clear that America is still in the chaotic stage of individual effort: the individualism of the unintegrated herd as contradistinguished from that of the social unit."

Where the Catholic is an incurable dualist, the Jew is a faithful monist. He has suffered persecution for centuries because of his monistic conception of the Deity. He cannot see why the Christian insists upon having two Persons in the Deity, with a third impalpable Principle to bind them together. Where the great modern American philosopher of Catholic background sets up scepticism and animal faith as dual principles, Morris Cohen makes the title of his book *Reason and Nature* and monistically binds the two together with his principle of polarity in an admirably tight construct even as that other brilliant Jewish philosopher, Spinoza, long ago astonished the Christians with his single-minded pantheism. Mr. Cohen admires the system of Mr. Santayana, even as the latter lauds that of Spinoza: Jewish monism and Catholic dualism draw together, as elder brothers, in scorn of Protestant pluralism, that upstart in the philosophic world. And of course Mr. Cohen unconsciously gives Mr. Santayana's dualism a monistic bent as he absorbs it into his own powerful thought.

What Mr. Cohen cannot abide, however, is the pluralistic pragmatism of William James. For the Protestants, William James and John Dewey, display in philosophy that same tendency to individualize and federalize rather than dualize or monize which Catholics and Jews find so extraordinary in our Protestant American political system. Note the characteristic title of Mr. Dewey's book, *Experience and Nature*. Here is no Catholic caught in the dilemma of dualism, and finally striving to extricate himself by tongue-in-cheek laudation of both horns of the eternal-temporal dilemma, calling the one scepticism and the other animal faith; here is no integrated monistic Jewish mind, polarizing reason and nature, confident that both are but phases of the one powerful and ancient throb of reality: no, in Dewey's title we find emphasized the Protestant's faith in his ability to fumble his way along, from experience to experience, into a workable compromise with that urgent and mysterious nature he feels all about him and within him. This same struggle between the three different attitudes is to be observed in the conduct of Catholic, Jew, and Protestant on our Supreme Bench. The Catholic justices are prone to build up an intricate scholastic structure of ostensibly eternal jurisprudential truth, and then use it to rationalize whatever temporal expedients are seemingly necessary. Mr. Justice Holmes the Protestant Liberal has dwelt in his decisions upon large ethical-political abstractions congenial to the temperament of the founders of the Republic. Mr. Justice Brandeis the Jewish Liberal on the other hand marshals economic facts and details with an amazing ability which Protestants and Catholics alike despair of equaling.

This Jewish monistic emphasis upon economics emerges, in certain classes and under certain conditions, in the communist "cell" as the unit of civic activity just as the Irish Catholic dualism results in the twin activities of church and state, this latter being in America, of course, Tammany. For if the Irishman is the natural leader of those who think in terms of a highly organized racial-religious group which sees an opportunity to transform its folkways into political power, so is the Jew the organizer of the poor and homeless and propertyless who think in terms of economics. And of course it is the Russian Jew among Jews as it is the Irishman among Catholics who has good reason for becoming a leader of the disinherited. The German Jew, who came earlier, united with German and Scandinavian immigrants and with some of the older Protestant elements to form the Socialist Party. This has now become, despite its nominal Marxist basis, a refuge for the Protestant Liberal, such as Norman Thomas, who holds to the traditional democracy and yet objects to both the stupid toryism of all too many members of his own racial-religious group and the sophomoric radicalism of those who occupy themselves with mere "Puritan"-baiting.

It is a commonplace that the theoretical structure of Communism as of the earlier Socialism was evolved by a Jew. Marx had studied the Hegelian dialectic in Germany and the industrial revolution in England. Hegel's dialectic may perhaps be thought of as a description, in terms of logic, of the characteristic Teutonic-Protestant instinct for progress or evolution, or blind enthusiastic growth, or barbarism, as Mr. Santayana might prefer to call it. Hegelianism in its political implications laid a sanction upon the Protestant national state and especially upon the one built up by the Hohenzollerns. Marx twisted this sanction to establish the monistic sacredness of the process of historical materialism which he with infallible Semitic eye perceived under the welter of feudal, agrarian, metaphysical, and religious tendencies manifested in the industrial revolution in England. Many things were happening, but one thing he saw clearly. This enormously simplified religion of materialism, with its implicit slogan of Nothing Matters but Matter and Marx Is Its Prophet, has as we all know had a great career in the modern world. Communists in America, armed with this philosophy, have almost completely coerced the Protestant Liberals intellectually. If the Liberal advances with pragmatic hesitancy some theory of what is happening or should happen in the Republic, he is laughed off the scene by those who have adopted the implacable monistic dialectic of Marxism, with its rhetorical emphasis upon only one element of the vital process. Any poor idea the Protestant Liberal may have is dismissed at once as "bourgeois ideology", as surely as in other quarters any emphasis he may strive to lay upon the rights of America is offset by prolonged keening over the wrongs of Ireland.

It ought to be added that the Jew should not be held responsible for any tendency toward nationalism, militarism, or crass imperialism which nominally socialist or communist groups manifest when in power. The Protestant Teutonic majority in Germany modified the original Marxism, making it nationalist, capable of backing the Kaiser in his military adventure. In Russia, after Jewish revolutionary energy and economic monism had done so much to establish power for the Communists, Trotsky the Jew, still dreaming of emphasis upon purely economic international aspects of Communism, was ejected by Stalin the man of Orthodox Catholic background, who naturally dwells upon the authoritarian nature of the state, just as that other man of Catholic background, Hitler, does in Germany, or Mussolini in Italy, or as did Porfirio Diaz in Mexico. It is especially interesting to see Hitler strive to compel German Protestants to emulate the structure of his own mediaeval church's organization, at the same time that he stirs up the mediaeval sport of Jew-baiting.

V

The foregoing sections have tried to remind the reader of the limitations of Jew, Catholic, and Protestant as molders and rulers of America. The Protestant, it has been indicated, has on the whole been too fortunate to be trusted completely by Catholics and Jews. He has been succesful pioneer, conqueror, and exploiter now for a long time: the problem is how to utilize the vortices of his energy without being swept by them into disaster or without being congealed with them into pathetic stony mementoes of dynamism long perished such as we see in encrustations of lava no longer molten and alive. The Catholic, on the other hand, has for centuries functioned as a conserver, a resister, an obduracy: we must somehow learn to appreciate and use this vital bony structure without ossifying likewise all other organs of the body politic and cultural. The Jew has over too prolonged a period been compelled to function without any bony structure at all, with no enduring mountains and valleys of a territorial nation to shape and steady his neurotic intelligence: we must set ourselves to the task of digesting more capably the countless darts and thrusts of his eager mind upon the vast hulk of our slowly expanding consciousness.

When it is said that "we" should do these things, to whom is the reference made? To the Protestant Garrison! It is to be insisted that while we have certain defects, and although we lack the social solidarity of Catholics and the economic intelligence of Jews, we can better serve the interests of all concerned by appreciating, civilizing, and practising our own virtues, instead of hardening into dogmatists or vainly striving to recant our essential qualities. We are pioneers, settlers, holders, rulers. We have a ready eye for the rough contour of a landscape, whether it be needed for a clearing, a farm, a battle, a government, or a poem. Let us use that eye more honestly, more thoroughly, more intelligently, but never blind it with dogmatism nor strive hysterically to pluck it out and cast it away. We have established America, and have invited or dragged folk of other races and religions here. Let us see if we can deserve to continue to rule this thing we have created.

It may be objected that this entire line of argument sounds perilously like the effort made by British intellectuals to rationalize that Empire won by antecedent force and greed; finding themselves on top of the heap because of their ancestors' brutality, they now endeavour to prove that they can be of service to those whom their forbears enslaved. The only way to meet this objection is to admit its truth: the Protestant Garrison occupies the same position amidst folk of other races and faiths in America that the Protestant Scotch and English hold in the British Empire. Nor is this merely a coincidence: we are the same people. Insisting upon the separate identities of the British and American Empires is a little like exaggerating the very real difference between London and Manchester. George Washington and George the Third did not quarrel about whether there should be an Empire; they discussed the details of its administration. Lord Cornwallis after his defeat at Yorktown dined with Washington and then proceeded to the Orient, where he helped to oust the French and subdue the East Indians, while Washington and his successors saw to it that the French and other European governments were held back while we were subduing the Indians of the West.

But after all this has been granted, what is to be done? Shall we wax hysterical and strive to abdicate from what we cannot hope to annul—our past? Would this not be to make the obvious blunder of assuming that because our own past is full of brutality, the past of other races is full of only sweetness and light? Or, if it be suggested that it is not the past but the future that is important, must we at once assume that only races other than our own can have anything worth while to say about the future? Why should the American of Protestant background, the moment he has sloughed off some of the more gross superstitions of his tribe, take up the additional superstition that while he may learn from Stalin or Mussolini, he cannot reasonably expect to be taught anything whatever by Ramsay MacDonald, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, or Norman Thomas?

Any honest Liberal will find as he strives to think out his position in these matters that he is afraid of being mistaken for a kind of Klansman. Perhaps this difficulty must be met as was the preceding one about the British Empire—by honestly admitting there is a rough truth to the essentials of the Klan position. These simple folk with their fiery cross are perhaps trying to remind the intellectuals that in the midst of our subtleties we must not forget certain simplicities. And often we do forget them. On the whole, our business as intellectuals is to be effective dreamers, that is, to forget reality in order that reality, later on, having been fed in the meantime by our brooding forgetfulness, may become somewhat different from what it now is.

Yet never is the useful intellectual wholly dissevered from his tribe. Again and again he must reject and oppose that tribe's superstitions; yet often, too, he must accept and transform them. Possibly it is as much his duty to receive dumb hints, inarticulate "hunches", from the much abused American yokels or hinds or even Rotarians, or from the purple-faced colonels of the high tory tradition in England, as it is the duty of Stalin to receive them from his peasantry and his Peter the Great, or Mussolini from his vine-dressers and condottieri. The intellectual must not, he can not, leave these suggestions or superstitions in their original form, but he can perhaps achieve more genuine intellectualism than he otherwise could, if he admits that after all his principal task is to elevate, expand, and civilize those crude raw materials turned up by the so-called mass mind which is just now under such a cloud. In short, he finds himself in America part of a tree of life, a growth from the darkness of the past into the obscurity of the future. And he may possibly feel that he has a right to remember that he and folk of his basic tradition constitute the root-stock and the trunk of this tree.

We return at the end, then, to a biological image—not of warring microbes, but of growth, cross-fertilization or engrafting. It is better to have a thing as solid and earthy as this, maybe, than the old gusty, rootless dream. Jew and Catholic and Protestant are growing into America now, and much that is traditional is become merely provincial. But as the old

State lines and rights fade, those Protestant principles of federalism and democracy which they represented will manifest themselves in the tracing of boundaries between the types of co-operation and influence which the great constituent races and religions can contribute to America. Nor will those boundaries be barriers: they will be acceptance of actuality's outlines, that civilization may increase.

A Letter to a God-Daughter

MY DEAREST PHILIPPA,

You cannot believe how delighted I was to get your letter asking for counsel and advice about your reading. I had begun to believe that there was very little that a sponsor in baptism could do these days, once the engraved silver mug was presented, and the Add-a-Pearl necklace fairly on its way. It used to be great fun to send you books when you were a little thing; and I still have, carefully preserved, the misspelled notes of passionate gratitude I had from you, written when you had come out of your trance of joy after reading George MacDonald's *A Double Story*, and Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy*.

I wish it were as simple to choose books for you now. It's not at all unlikely, it seems to me, that you may not turn back to me for help on this subject once you have read my letter. For one thing, I suspect that your teacher, Miss Greer, and I do not see eye to eye on modern literature. I might as well confess early as late that I shivered with apprehension at the line where you reported her as having said that if she had her way she'd make a bonfire of all the "required-reading" books, and replace them with "good modern novels that would really teach the girls what life was like". It seems so very probable to me that she and I would not agree on which modern novels were good, in the first place, not to speak of what life is like. And when you quoted her as considering Sinclair Lewis a master of satire I was confirmed in my doubts.

It is very nice of you to say you wish I knew Miss

Greer; but heavens, my darling, I do! Fate seems to see to it that there is always a Miss Greer on every school staff, no matter how conscientiously supervised. Isn't she "just like one of the girls"? And doesn't she smoke cigarettes with you up the chimney (or its present equivalent) after hours? I suspect she reports an occasional remonstrance from the Head in a way for which she would never get hung if Miss Thatcher happened to hear of it, but which still rouses Miss Greer's own admirers to indignation or giggles, as the case may be. You say that she is the only teacher there with "a sense of direction", but you don't specify what the direction is. I have been hearing a lot about that "sense of direction" lately, and the suspicion has dawned on me that those who have it are like the "forward-looking" teachers of my mother's day, and the "broad-minded" teachers of my own.

Have I hit it? If I have it's by no supernatural penetration. You see, you've told me just enough about her for me to recognize the sort of teacher who is forever working around, under and behind the backs of her fellow-workers; always persuading the pupils who admire her that there is a conspiracy against youth, that the old standards are worthless and the instructors who stay in the tradition a group of unprogressive Tories. For some reason no young person ever seems to realize immediately that the activities of such engaging heretics are always and eternally sly, and that the honesty which they are forever preaching and—well, touting is the word I want—is the one quality which is conspicuously absent from their own conduct in office.

Before I alienate you beyond all recapture I will make a confession of my own: I do wish the College Board requirements in English literature could have a thorough going-over. One of the rewards of being an adult is, in my eyes, that never again shall I have to read of little Effie, or that stupefying namesake of mine who bores her way through *Middlemarch*; the tinsel Rebecca and the cardboard Rowena taught me very little that lingers with me, I admit (but I *did* read *The Talisman* again with some pleasure one week-end last year, when the alternative was the latest book by Evelyn Waugh). And so on. You see, we have plenty of grounds for agreement, even though I cannot see "the best of the moderns" as the proper authors to replace the duller required books in your course in English literature. If Miss Greer could have her way I am afraid you would never, in any society worthy of the name, be considered an educated woman. I am really in earnest when I say that I don't consider that you have earned your right to read modern books extensively yet.

I mean by that that you are the inheritor of an immensely long and rich literature, and you have not begun yet to claim your heritage. A lifetime would not be enough to exhaust it; but you have already been made impatient at the prospect of doing what you can, in these sheltered years, to fill your mind with the treasures of your race. Now come! How are you going to practise discrimination when you do not know the heights and depths which English prose can reach? What is any book going to mean to you when its allusions are obscure? Any truly good book is rooted in the literature which already exists, and you cannot, surely, be asking me to send you, as "the best modern novels", some of the rootless, pointless ephemeral books of our day?

When I got your letter pleading with me to send you some new books, and saying that Miss Thatcher would allow you to read them if you could assure her that they came from your godmother in New York (that literary Mecca, I've no doubt you meant!), I was properly flattered, as you intended me to be. And in your behalf, my dear, and because I am susceptible to flattery, I have put in a most extraordinary ten days. I have been reading with emotion far too deep for tears most of the more wildly applauded novels of the past few weeks.

First of all I read the master of satire's latest book: *Work of Art.** Are you sure you want to read all about what I suppose is called "the hotel business"? I found it incredibly dull, myself. That meat-axe subtlety, that irony laid on with a trowel; those *echt*-American names in the great comic style: Ora Weagle, J. Hector Warlock, Mr. Monlux, and others. The story is about brothers, one of whom considers himself an artist, but is really a cadging hypocrite, and the other of whom never dreams of himself as anything but a prosaic business-man, and who yet achieves a work of art in a perfect hotel. The hotel is ruined on its opening night by a purely fortuitous scandal, but that scandal will have been hailed as a supremely ironic touch from coast to coast by the time you receive this letter.

Now the minimum requirement for a great satirist,

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* WORK OF ART *by Sinclair Lewis* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. 452 pp. $2.50)

I should suppose any thoughtful person would agree, is that the author should give us some sign in his work that he can envisage an order of society better, nobler (if you will pardon the word), more distinguished, and still practicable, than the one he is occupied in deriding. Of this I can find no hint in Mr. Lewis. Without some such ideal in reserve, the true point of satire is lost, and you have left only malicious reporting, or taunting burlesque.

I know it is the fashion to speak of Mr. Lewis's uncannily good ear for American speech. Even there I must dissent, or at least qualify. It is good, *but only in a limited range*. Do you remember the canaries in the dining-room window, and how you were told, when you saw their beaks open and their throats throbbing, that they were still singing although we could hear no sound? They were singing notes higher than the human ear can register. Well, I suspect that throats throb all around Mr. Lewis, but that due to some idiosyncratic defect in his hearing, no words reach him. At least that is the only explanation that covers the strange speeches he puts into the mouths of those of his characters whom he considers educated men. No, on the whole, if you insist on reading *Work of Art*, you will have to borrow Miss Greer's copy.

I will send you *Sea Level*,* though, if you like; with a sigh to think that you are not yet prepared to read it against a background of sounder work. It is not necessary that every novel should show characters acting heroically. There is very little heroism in the work of Jane Austen, for instance. And yet her characters are not a cast of cripples. The mind, we are

* SEA LEVEL *by Anne Parrish* (HARPER'S. 373 PP. $2.50)

taught in philosophy, has three faculties: reason, imagination, and will. In Miss Parrish's books you will find that the characters have, or have not, imagination; and there's an end to it. You will seldom find them reasoning, except after the fact, perhaps; and you will almost never catch them at anything so gross as coming to a decision.

In this book about a world cruise the sheep and the goats are set off from each other by only one quality. The sheep are sensitive, the goats have no sensitiveness. The sheep are drawn with malice and pity, the goats are limned with malice alone. There is no catharsis by Pity and Malice; which may be the reason for the final dissatisfaction with which one lays each of this author's books aside.

She writes well, although frequently she falls into clichés which, if they had been uttered by one of her characters, she would have been the first to deride. Such a description as this, of Mount Everest at sunrise, is hardly distinguished enough from an author who winces so habitually at the crudities of her fellows:

> The unearthly white summits, the fluted sides, the rivers and cascades of snow and ice, turned a pale pink and deepened and burned. Clouds rose from the sea of clouds, flaming with colour, curving to shadow; floated up; melted.

Yet that is as high as the writing reaches.

But in the Quivering Sensibility school, this book should rank near the top. There are innumerable authors today in whom pity is like a disease; Dorothy Parker is their high priestess, but Anne Parrish runs her a close second. In their eyes we become Poor Little Humanity, blundering about blindly, hurting ourselves and each other, our courage dwindled to a gallant gesture, our capacity for heroism forgotten or denied. Their ideal world, so far as one can discover it, would be a place in which everyone should be kindly and well-bred; a kind of Land of Cockaigne of the spirit, in which the ruggeder virtues would droop and die.

There is no story to recount to you: an enormous cast of characters, divided into those who are unhappy and those who are smug, go around the world together on a great liner; that is all. It will do you no harm, but I would rather think you were reading about Lemuel Gulliver in these hours.

*Wedding Song** you will certainly never get from me. I would not willingly introduce you to a neurotic cad in my home, so I can see no suitability in introducing you to one in the pages of a modern novel. I am a little sorry not to be sending you this, for Mr. Burnham can write well when he chooses; but good writing is wasted on a preposterous story of a young man with one fixed idea: to humiliate and ruin his father. You would meet, as well, another large cast of Poor Little Humanities, hiding their pain behind gentleness or flippancy, as the case may be.

Mr. Burnham, and dozens of others—the Waughs, Cowards, Hemingway, and so on—are writers who in a simpler age would have written rather boyishly precious books about Playing the Game. Born into our more sophisticated day, they have refined the formula. They now hold that there is no game to play, but go through the motions, nevertheless. They

* WEDDING SONG *by David Burnham* (VIKING. 376 pp. $2.50)

make up extraordinary rules of their own to serve them as a code, but it is hardly worth the space to elaborate what is and is not permissible in their eyes. Their books remind me for all the world of the Caucus Race in *Alice*; each character begins running when he wants to and stops when he likes. Here again I would rather have you reading Kipling, who is no more *naïf* than these bright young men, although it is the fashion to sniff at him today. Or read Ford Madox Ford, who still knows how to draw a gentleman.

I hardly know how to tell you about the next book I read in your service: *Everywoman.** I was attracted by what was obviously the most flagrantly presumptuous title Mr. Frankau could have chosen, since he has given, up to date, very little evidence that he knows what anyone is like, let alone a typical woman.

The book was even funnier than I anticipated. Everywoman, you must understand, is half-English and half-Italian, and an excellent artist. Her career embraces two husbands, with a prospect of a third, one lover, and innumerable suitors to whom she surrenders what our parents were accustomed to call "her favours" in return for specie. Mr. Frankau's attempt to spike the guns of criticism, first by a quotation from Pope ("But every woman is at heart a rake"), and second by a long and pretentious letter to his sister in which he sets forth his novelist's credo, is not successful. If Mr. Frankau has read the rest of the poem from which he abstracts his title he must know that Pope did not define a rake as a woman who sold herself for money, under whatever urgency of need; and the letter to the sister is just nonsense.

* EVERYWOMAN *by Gilbert Frankau* (DUTTON. 447 pp. $2.50)

The long and short of it was that Mr. Frankau's feelings were hurt. He blames his sister for his writing the book, but continues:

> Nor is the responsibility yours alone. Another woman shares it. But since I have forgotten the name, as the world has forgotten the book, of that other woman, we will leave her out of the account. . . . Suffices that she did write a book in which she saw fit to mention my writings. . . .

and he goes on to say how little he cares for the slings and arrows of the "outraged highbrow". This is very brave, but not very convincing. I am fortunate enough to remember both the author and the book which Mr. Frankau has so incontinently forgotten: it was *Fiction and the Reading Public*, and its author Q. D. Leavis. She mentioned Mr. Frankau to pulverize him, and did as good a job as I have ever seen done. You may remember I reviewed it in these pages not long ago. *There* is a book which I would gladly send you in spite of my disagreements on its final judgements; only I will not part with my copy, and it has not been published in this country yet. If you had read it you would be immune to the sensational vulgarity of *Everywoman*, which adds blasphemy to its failings, although I am sure Mr. Frankau cannot know it.

So, on the whole, my search for books for you has been nearly fruitless, and I am very sorry. I remember well how restive one is at your age, both anticipating and dreading the sally out into the adult world. I should like to make a bargain with you, and on my terms I would keep you supplied with more than enough books to fill every leisure hour from now until graduation. It is this: I will send you Aldous Huxley if you will first read Thomas Love Peacock; I will send you such things as H. G. Wells's *Men Like Gods* if you will read Thomas More's *Utopia*; you shall have all the Proust you can absorb after a while spent conscientiously with Henry James; and I will even send you *Everywoman* if you will read Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana.* For I gather there is no point in sheltering you from the "facts of life", now that you have met and admired Miss Greer.

But if my bargain seems too exacting there are still books which I can send you, and which I promise you you will not find dreary. You shall have all the novels of Charles Williams, for one thing, though I shall have to order all but *The Place of the Lion* from his English publisher. Any of Sigrid Undset's books which you have not seen are yours on demand, and also any novel of Willa Cather or Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Sheila Kaye-Smith, if you like, and almost all of L. A. G. Strong; some of Martin Armstrong; the enchanting books of Walter de la Mare, and the short stories of A. E. Coppard. Selected titles from the works of Robert Nathan (for although we are pitiful and frail in his eyes, too, yet he transcends that attitude again and again). Beyond that, at the moment, I cannot go. No doubt there are other books which I could send you, but I shall have to think and think and think.

Your devoted godmother,

DOROTHEA BRANDE

T. S. Stribling: a Paragraph in the History of Critical Realism

Robert Penn Warren

The novels of T. S. Stribling have been rewarded by some critical enthusiasm, a considerable cash-money popularity, and the official accolade of a Pulitzer prize. All of this is, as it were, within the bounds of conceivable justice: Stribling's work is the product of a good many years of conscientious industry, and of an eye that can unerringly mark the fashions as they fly. Stribling has never been the first by whom the new was tried; he has nothing of the experimenter in his literary constitution. Nor is he the last, precisely, to lay the old aside; some novelists still engage themselves in critico-realistic presentations of the American village or the American peasant, while Stribling has taken his paraphernalia of realism and followed certain adventurous souls into the spacious vistas of American history. Stribling is primarily interesting as the index of a fashion which he has flattered with sober conscience and profound unoriginality.

Stribling's novels will appear in the history of our literature as a paragraph in the development, or conceivably the decline, of what is generally called critical realism in fiction. This is not the mere realism of device, the sort of realism one speaks of in the *Ancient Mariner* or in the novels of Thomas Hardy. It is, instead, an extension of the naturalistic premise: the naturalistic novelist took science as the source of his method and his philosophy. His method was, professedly, objective and transcriptive; he was concerned with fact, not value. Motivation of human conduct was to be understood in terms of biology, bio-chemistry, and such. These pretensions received their most substantial criticism some forty years ago from Ferdinand Brunetière, a criticism less trenchantly re-adapted by Stuart P. Sherman from an attack on Zola to an attack on Dreiser.

As the naturalistic novel, in one sense, is based on a science, biology, so the realistic novel that we now know is based on a pseudo-science, sociology. The realistic novelist, like the sociologist, professes a scientific objectivity in dealing with his materials, that is, in making his surveys. What this objectivity amounts to is no more than the objectivity of the naturalistic writer. It provides the same "truth", if "truth" at all, by the same process of elimination and focus, a process which, indeed, is necessarily common to all fiction. But by differences in nature of origin the realistic and naturalistic novels differ in one fundamental respect. The biologist, the anatomist, when about his professional business, is, as far as is humanly possible, a mere observer, albeit an observer in terms of hypothesis; he never offers a project to rationalize the human figure by endowing it with three legs instead of the traditional two. Nor is he even a physician, a mender of broken-down two-legged figures. The sociologist, on the other hand, is engaged in a study which, finally, must involve values of a kind, and which, therefore, has a prescriptive, as well as descriptive, aspect. The matter may simply rest on this: the distinction between the theoretical and applied branches of a science, biology say, is more clearly marked than that between the theoretical and applied branches of the pseudo-science, sociology. But a further consideration may appear: the biologist cannot yet by taking thought add the Biblical cubit to his stature, he cannot change, can only mend, a body by the application of his knowledge, while the perpetual mutations of social orders perpetually seduce the sociologist from description and prediction to the more arrogant prescription. Sociology lends itself, even assuming the objectivity of its surveys, to the projects of reform; if it were otherwise, the sociologist were not more, but less, man. It is reasonable that, in view of its origin, the realistic novel is never purely realistic; it is critical, which generally means satiric and propagandist as well.

And so it is with the novels of Stribling.

There are two primary issues which appear in the study of a novelist of the order of Stribling. First, what is the actual content of his criticism; that is, what things in society does he dislike, and to what set of ideas do these dislikes refer? Second, what is the effect of this preoccupation on his work as an art form? From a given novel or given episode the two issues may be dissected out, in most cases, only by a certain exercise of violence. But the very crudity of much of Stribling's work, especially in the novels before *The Forge*, makes the task less arduous. And the various elements in a novel like *Teeftallow* are so rudely assimilated that the mayhem of abstraction rests lightly on the aesthetic conscience.

The critical premises of Stribling's early and recent work are identical. He has developed in narrative expertness (his mechanical ingenuity has always been considerable), but his point of view has remained unchanged; he has only transferred his method from the contemporary to the historical scene, following what in most current examples of the type is but a fashionable device to heighten the critical importance of a work by making it parade as historical explanation of a contemporary social situation. As such, his historical novels are but an extension of the sociological principle of his previous work.

The critical realist, ordinarily, is sparing of a forthright exposition of constructive ideas in his work; and as a novelist rightly so. But his work is very fruitful of his distastes. And his distastes lend the work its special aura, or in less expert instances, its special mannerisms. They are a clue to the novelist's principles, which may, or may not, according to his powers, be orderly, consistent, and intelligent.

I shall sample some of Stribling's distastes.

In *Teeftallow* the hill boy comes to Irontown to work on the railroad construction gang, and attends for the first time a drinking and gambling party in the woods:

> Some of the nearer stragglers whistled discreetly at the two youths, and Zed answered them. Three men came up; one had a bottle. He passed it round with "Have a jolt". "Take a kick". "Bail her out". As each man drank he wiped the mouth of the bottle carefully on his shirtsleeve and returned it to the owner. There was a certain ritualism about it which impressed Abner as being urbane and cultured. These Irontown men certainly had a polish one didn't find in the hills.

This passage, chosen at random, is a fair example of the sort of thing Stribling dislikes, and of his method in dealing with it. He is not content to describe the drinking manners of the men and the effect on the boy; he must describe them in terms, *culture* and *urbanity*, which are foreign to the boy's way of thinking, and which provide the irony and the criticism. He must cast the scene against a drawing-room background. Such irony, characteristic of all the books before *The Forge*, is too easy; and it may be vulgar.

That agreeable drawing-room, with its culture and urbanity, is never far from Stribling's consciousness; and the theme of his treatment of manners is that it is very far away from the Tennessee and Alabama back-country. In *Bright Metal* the Christian Workers enjoy their social hour:

> There was something agreeable, almost romantic, to the Christian Workers to have the piano rattling or a song going while they conversed in undertones. It gave them an impression of culture, and of refined drawing-rooms. They were lifted momentarily out of their humdrum lives by what they fancied was an imitation of fine society and wealth. Whereas if they simply sat in silence and listened, they became bored and yawned covertly, and had to blink their eyes to keep from going to sleep.

Or again, from *Teeftallow*:

> The dining-room of the Scovell House was dark and smelly as if air and sunlight were luxuries hardly to be arrived at in the country. The table linen was dirty and torn; the silver plating was worn off the spoons; the coffee cost thirty cents a pound. Yet Abner could never enter the dining-room of the Scovell House without a certain embarrassment at the magnificence of its service.

Stribling, in presenting Abner and the Scovell House, has leagued himself and the reader together in a common acquaintance with the decorous and sanitary luxury of expensive hotels. In more complicated fashion he employs the same effect:

> Not a person was on the streets. The village was at supper. The village devoted this single moment of the day when all the filth of its streets and all the moral crudities and pettinesses of its life were forgiven in the solemn absolution of sunset; it devoted that single moment to eating. What cared the village for this pageantry of the west? Of what moment to them was this tender forgiving hour; they who had nothing to be forgiven? Let them eat hot bread in mean rooms beneath the lithographs of dead fish, let them talk of the last scandal, or simply eat in silence. That miracle of jade and turquoise fades slowly into the sea-blue depth of night, but what have they to do with that?

The implication of this passage, which, incidentally, is a fair example of Stribling in purple and poetic mood, is twofold. What offends him is not so much the lack of spiritual sympathy between man and nature as the "mean rooms" and the "lithographs of dead fish". If the furnishings were more expensive and decorous, he, apparently, could more easily condone the failure to appreciate the spiritual value of the "pageantry of the west". And further, the implication is that in other places, in large cities, people postpone the dinner hour in order to receive the "solemn absolution of sunset". The point is this: as a criticism of humanity in general, too busy about gratifying its practical appetites, or too weary from so doing, to take what compensation nature affords, Stribling's passage might be just, or partially just; but the trouble with it is that a commentary on human nature in general is paraded as a special piece of social criticism referring to a special locality. The lithographs and the hot bread are the special elements; these special items of realistic perception are treated as symbols for the general proposition, that is, as supplying the machinery of conviction for readers who, since they do not eat hot bread under lithographs of dead fish, feel themselves to be morally and aesthetically superior. Irontown has simply stood whipping-boy for the world.

In large part Stribling's criticism savours of the easy hick-baiting of a dead decade. It is dated. For him almost any young white man who does not live in a large city is a "hobbledehoy". No decency of spirit is possible in a house without modern plumbing. All lives lived in sections he deals with are "humdrum" or "monotonous". This sort of thing defines the pervasive tone of his work; by cumulative effect in any of the novels it defines the author's, and possibly the reader's, set toward the material. Thus far it is a snobbery based on radio and nationally advertised mouthwashes. Further, a man like Stribling would, in all probability, find the society of Florence, Alabama, in the sixties and seventies or the society of Lane County, Tennessee, in the 1920's an inappropriate *milieu* for the proper exercise of his education, manners, and talents. Let that be granted, if desired. But it scarcely requires some half-dozen novels to establish the fact; and such preoccupation does not, to employ a phrase once popular among hick-baiters, seem adult.

Stribling does not confine himself to such peripheral items, but has treated, likewise, certain more fundamental social ideas. *Teeftallow* is dedicated to the "hill theocracy", and devoted to the study of the social effects of religion, a theme which also appears in *Bright Metal* and *Birthright*. Religion, for him, is "greasy". And according to *Birthright*, *Teeftallow*, and *Bright Metal*, it is impossible for a person to be devout without, at the same time, being a fool or a knave, usually in his novels the latter. The banker in *Birthright*, under the excitement of evangelical piety, swindles the mulatto Peter out of a hundred dollars, which is immediately put in an envelope and addressed to a missionary in the Sudan. The banker in *Teeftallow* is the pillar of piety in Irontown, but (or rather, *therefore*) is introduced to the reader in the act of mulcting the ignorant hill boy Teeftallow out of his unsuspected inheritance. Agatha, the New York actress who has married into a Lane County family, when reminded of her husband's fundamental indifference to things religious, thinks: "If Pom hadn't been reared down here, he would be a normal man." As far as one can judge from the material at hand, that is Stribling's doctrine: religion is abnormal. It is also necessarily associated with dishonesty and cruelty, swindling, slander, lynching; on the evidence of *Teeftallow*, the only citizen of Lane County who is capable of unselfishness or idealism is the village atheist.

It remains an open question whether Stribling is ready to apply this description to all religion whatsoever, or whether he reserves it for Lane County fundamentalism. It will, probably, not long remain an open question; for, according to information furnished by the publishers, Stribling's forthcoming *Un-*

finished Cathedral, the final member of his trilogy, presents the triumph of modernism in Florence, Alabama, a triumph concretely realized in the non-denominational cathedral which, appropriately, is financed by Colonel Vaiden's somewhat ill-gotten gains. And even Stribling, I suppose, will find it difficult to avoid the conclusion, from this arrangement, that his Southern back country is at last becoming enlightened according to the pattern of American liberal thought, the general pattern from which his previous criticisms are directed.

The conservative sexual morality of Lane County has received some comment. Agatha, the New York actress who has rather illogically married into the community, is riding with a poor neighbour boy whose face reminds her of Pan:

> Agatha sensed the discomfort she had wrought in him by this casual mention of bearing children. And his discomfort annoyed her somehow. Why could he not look upon reproduction as a simple biological fact? To be embarrassed at an allusion to it. "In reality", thought Agatha, "to be embarrassed is as distressing as to be salacious about it." She felt sorry for Risdale. She felt someone ought to give the youth a saner view of life.

Which, within a hundred pages or so, she proceeds to do. She brings this enlightenment to Lane County by committing adultery with the youth. But since the act is treated by Stribling in a rare access of romantic charm; since an heirloom lace night-dress is loaned by the boy's mother for the unsuspected occasion; and since the boy himself is connected, if rather remotely, with a cultured land-owning family of Tidewater, Maryland, the act is beyond application of Stribling's critico-realistic method. It is disinfected, and rendered less worthy of comment than the boy's gauche wink while introducing Agatha to Mr. Napoleon Suggs.

Stribling's method of dealing with the race question in the South, another issue that absorbs a considerable amount of his energy, is compact of equal realism. His method is to bring into collision a noble Negro, or rather a mixed-breed, and a white society considerably less than noble. Peter of *Birthright*, and Toussaint and Gracie of *The Forge* and *The Store*, are examples. Through the eyes of Peter, a graduate of Harvard who has come home to found a school, the oppressions, stupidities, and brutalities of the white community are presented: Peter is swindled in buying land for his school, loses the confidence of the Negroes themselves as a result, and, in the end, only marries the wife he desires after she has been blackmailed into becoming the mistress of her white employer. Peter's moral and intellectual superiority is constantly held in contrast to the society about him. The only other educated man in the community, the old aristocrat who, presumably, is Peter's own father, is the intellectual foil for Peter's emancipation, since in the old man's library there are no books that indicate a respect for Darwinism. Peter finally gives up the unequal struggle, beaten by the prejudice of the whites and the inertia and fatalism of the Negroes, and goes North to seek his and Cissie's personal salvation; he goes North where he would soon be "moving briskly, talking to wide-awake men to whom a slightly unusual English word would not form a stumbling block to conversation", where he and his wife could "lead authentic lives".

What is the reference of Stribling's method to actuality? Is it sound sociology? In one respect I have already hinted that it is not. For instance, it is probably bad sociology to assume that religion is necessarily connected with moral depravity. But it is in attempts at social comparison that Stribling's sociology is at its worst, that is, when the snobbery of mouthwash is transferred into the field of ideas. The principle of comparison Stribling uses is to bring the Peter Siner of *Birthright*, the Ditmas of *Teeftallow*, or the Gracie and Toussaint of *The Store* into conflict with the Southern society of his novels. These heroes and heroines are either Yankees or Negroes. They would be, as persons, exceptional in any society: they are not representative by reason of education or individual quality.

Stribling, if pressed, would probably admit this; but he is perpetually tempted in the transaction of his business as a novelist to give another implication in his comparisons between the white and Negro races or between North and South. Ditmas, the Yankee engineer of *Teeftallow*, is astonished at what Stribling calls the "narrow Hebraism" of the village. "What do you Northern folks discuss, what do you think about?" inquires the village atheist, the only citizen of Lane County whom Stribling has ever endowed with any intellectual appetite except the boy of *Bright Metal*. And Ditmas replies: "Well, when you leave out business, we [*i.e.*, Northern society as a whole] are occupied with sports, fiction, drama, science, philosophy, and such things." But a similar effect may be accomplished less barefacedly by mere variation in tone, by treating the chosen characters with a sympathy denied the more average human beings who are selected to represent Southern white society. This is the more subtle device employed in a novel like *The Store* in handling the race question: Toussaint, for instance, is the only man who possesses a true pride and strength of character. Stribling consistently attempts to enlist sympathy for the special individual who happens to oppose the society he treats; and such sympathy, by the tone of the writing, is transferred to a general proposition. He has never, in the whole course of his work, brought into comparison a Peter Siner with an educated white youth; a Southern business man like Colonel Vaiden with a Northern business man; a Toussaint with a white man of equal character; a Southern Methodist with a Boston Catholic. He has never been interested in the dramatic possibilities of a superior Southern white man brought into conflict with his native environment, a theme which Faulkner has used in *Sanctuary* and Caroline Gordon in *Penhally*. This is simply one piece of evidence that Stribling is not primarily interested in the personal and dramatic at all; his imagination is only concerned with a documentation of his thesis.

In the treatment of his favourite critical themes in the two historical novels, *The Forge* and *The Store*, Stribling exhibits another characteristic which impairs, even more than mere prejudice, the value of his sociological observations. His historical sense is deficient. The injustices of the social and economic arrangements of the South, the "narrowness" of its life, are interpreted as a sort of intrinsic brutality, a brutality mystically inherent in the Southern white man and special to him. *The Forge* begins just at the outbreak of the Civil War, the topic which involves most of the author's energies throughout the book. The nature of the system of life which preceded the war is never touched more than casually; consequently a reader of *The Forge* would scarcely understand the issues of the struggle. One character, apparently a spokesman for Stribling, refers to the conflict as one between two opposing forms of wealth, or two forms of capitalism. And even less would a reader understand from *The Store* the complexity of the problems which confronted the South after the Civil War: the problem of labour, the problem of franchise, the problem of race. The fact that these problems have not been solved is accounted for, in implication at least, by a basic stupidity or brutality. And certainly Stribling is unaware of the possibility that the social structure he seems to abhor is to be understood, to a degree, only as a result of the commercialized liberalism and uninformed idealism which directed the consolidation of the conquest of the South in the years immediately following the Civil War. He is trapped in the same sort of paradox as Sinclair Lewis, his master. Lewis satirized small-town life, provincial life; at least that is what he thought he was doing. But an analysis of Gopher Prairie shows that most of the things that distressed Lewis there are largely the result of the attempt on the part of Gopher Prairie to imitate the big city. Gopher Prairie is the kind of village that can be expected in a country where Chicago and New York are the great cities. What Stribling is attacking is merely the frailty of human nature; but when his attack takes more specific terms its final object, though many times removed, is only the victorious liberalism of the sixties and the several following decades.

It is probably too much to expect that Stribling should understand this. His thinking stems too directly from that same tradition. If he lacks the historical sense, it is because American liberalism has, in general, lacked the historical sense. If he is a hick-baiter, and sometimes a snob, it is because American liberalism in its more unphilosophical varieties has made such possible. The natural opposition to the liberal movement comes from the conservative country; therefore when the liberal loses his temper hick-baiting is his ordinary recourse. Liberalism flourished as the corollary to our great era of commercial expansion; therefore when the liberal loses his manners his ordinary recourse is snobbery.

Stribling has indicated much abuse and narrowness in Southern society that is indefensible. That is obvious. But there have been three defects in his surveys. He has been consciously or unconsciously disingenuous in his social comparisons. He has been too absolute in his definition of Southern character. He has failed to understand the historical context of the incidents he cites, and consequently has failed to give any final meaning to his criticism. The criticism remains as a sort of exhibit of chaotic observations, keen enough in detail, but incoherent. The state of mind from which the books are written remains a strange compound of hick-baiting, snobbery, and humanitarianism: in a word, disordered liberalism. But that was the state of mind fashionable in the decade when Stribling developed his literary powers.

But there is another, and more important, question:

what is the effect of Stribling's preoccupation on his novels as novels?

His novels, even the most recent ones and the most expert, show a quality which is fairly common to writers who are propagandists, that is, who keep their critical doctrines, as doctrines, in the foreground of the reader's consciousness. This quality is a detachment from the material. It is not the sort of detachment found in a story like Ivan Bunin's *Gentleman from San Francisco*, where the rigidly maintained point of view provides an inflection of noble irony to the simple account of the death of a vulgar tourist in Sicily. Nor is it mere dramatic objectivity. It is something else: the propagandist, finally, is never quite close to his material because he is infatuated with some system of abstractions and fears that, if he gets too close to his material, the cherished "truths" may be absorbed in the complexity of its being. His interest in the special persons and the special incidents of his stories is essentially an interest in illustration.

In the books before *The Forge* this detachment is most obvious, for it appears as a commentary that keeps pace with the narrative. The business of this commentary, as Stribling apparently conceives it, is to generalize the particular aspect of character or particular incident and affirm it as a trait of the class he happens to be dealing with at the time. Instances of this mannerism are almost innumerable. An incident may be introduced purely as illustration: "As an example of the progress of a lawsuit as a source of news, here is one of the rumors that went the rounds." With such an introduction, the reader's set toward the forthcoming event is fixed; his interest is to be one of social analysis, pure and simple, the interest in character drained away, even the brute interest in the event deadened. Commonly, Stribling is not so obviously inept as in the instance just quoted, but his commentary always provides the same inflection. The most immediate evil of this method is the constant violation of point of view and a constant interruption of the pace of his narrative. The first two quotations in this essay are excellent examples in so far as examples can be given in little.

Other evils, which impinge less immediately on the reader, are more fundamental. I have said that Stribling is most ingenious in the working out of plot. He is able, especially in *The Store* and *The Forge*, to contrive a plot which involves a great number of actors in several series of co-ordinate incidents. But this ingenuity is, in a sense, wasted. It is wasted because the ingenuity too frequently remains ingenuity: it is applied to the business of illustrating his general propositions. In *Birthright* the mulatto Peter Siner must be brought into contact with as many Southern types as possible; he is the focus of the social survey Stribling is making. And so with Agatha Pomeroy of *Bright Metal*, or Abner of *Teeftallow*. This is the object of plot.

The nature of plot, however, can only be called arbitrary in terms of its relation to character. It is conceivable, for instance, that a Negro graduate of Harvard might decide one fine morning to call on all the businessmen of Hooker's Bend, Tennessee, and give them a lecture on racial amity and higher wages for cooks, basing his claims on sound economic doctrine and a Christlike vision. But when Peter Siner does this it is a fairly transparent device on the part of Stribling to bring into debate the enlightened with the traditionally Southern view on Negro labour. Peter Siner, as a human being, is as wooden as a post and perfectly irrelevant to the debate. The fact that he wonders how Jesus felt before his first sermon in Nazareth scarcely humanizes the incident; that wonderment itself is too obviously a play for sympathy by the author. The rape of Gracie by Miltiades Vaiden in *The Forge* is equally arbitrary and unmotivated, or unmotivated except on Stribling's assumption that every Southern white man is prepared to assault any Negro woman at the drop of a hat. The fact that in reality such things have occurred with more or less frequency is without bearing on the special case. Stribling's obligation as a novelist is to make the act plausible in its special context; but this is the very thing he does not even trouble to attempt, for he is so easy in his basic assumption that he dismisses any psychological concern. The psychology is that of a novel like *The Clansman*, a work which Stribling, presumably, would not admire.

Character, like plot, is treated with an illustrative bias. In *The Forge* and *The Store*, which set out to give a picture of Southern life for several generations, the characters are selected to illustrate certain preconceived types: Lacefield, the aristocrat; Cady, the share-cropper; Handback, a deacon in the Methodist Church who keeps a Negro mistress and who bleeds the Negro croppers; O'Shawn, the Governor, a windbag politician. Stribling's ingenious sense of plot construction, and his very characters themselves, often appear somewhat artificial, simply because the characters bear too clearly the mark of their conception. They retain the taint of illustration; they are too mathematically exact, and, in consequence, predictable. Lacefield, for instance, is straight out of all the second-rate romantic fiction about the Southern planter; he is in the book simply to express certain sentiments with which Stribling has a sociological concern. Cady is straight out of all the second-rate realistic fiction about the Southern cropper or "poor-white"; he appears in *The Store* simply to serve as a foil for Toussaint's manhood and to illustrate the hatred and brutality of his class—a class that inspires Stribling with unusual rancour—toward the recently emancipated Negroes. These characters do not remind one of life, but of that other fiction. (A mere detail in this failure in reality of the portraits is Stribling's failure of visual imagination. He is no master of that physical detail, often logically irrelevant, that can focus a scene—a detail like the master of the *Patna* scratching his belly in the lantern light as he leans to look at the chart in *Lord Jim*.) The point is that Stribling has been too much occupied with the business of illustration to observe his material in other terms, to give it that loving attention for its own sake that would mean the breath of life in its nostrils. Or perhaps he has been too much occupied with increasing the scope of his work, enlarging his canvas, to suffer the essential concentration. And in fiction the multiplicity of example proves nothing.

Occasionally Stribling is betrayed into a moment of irrelevance when he neglects his ordinary preoccupation, and when, just for those moments, he is an artist. In *The Forge* old Mrs. Vaiden comes suddenly alive for the reader when the daughter-in-law Rose sees her taking an afternoon nap on a pallet on the floor and experiences a wave of tenderness at the smallness, the childlikeness, of the old woman. This is one of the moments. Another, in *The Store*, is when the ghost of the suicide Handback appears to his mulatto mistress in the kitchen. On such occasions Stribling's principle of composition disappears, lost in the too momentary vitality of his characters.

In general, from all of Stribling's novels, but two characters emerge with any final claim on the imagination: Gracie, and Miltiades Vaiden. But this claim is not consistent. In *The Forge* the presentation of both is marred by Stribling's usual deficiencies, and even in *The Store* something of the allegorical order still clings to the Colonel, especially in the long record of his business dealings. The interest provoked by that chronicle is essentially an interest in pure intrigue or an interest in what it all means as a social proposition. The Colonel resorts to an extra-legal justice to establish the fortune wherewith to imitate the splendours of the defunct order which, as a young man, he had witnessed but not participated in. In this rôle he is not compelling, but the more private aspects of his life, his relations to Ponny or his twenty-year courtship of Drusilla Lacefield, in so far as these aspects can be disengaged from his prevailing ambition, show that Stribling has a positive capacity for the creation of character. In *The Store* the handling of the Colonel's character is relatively free from those blemishes of the arbitrary, such as the rape of Gracie, or perhaps the marriage to Ponny, which appear in *The Forge*. Probably the finest bit in *The Store* is the scene when the Colonel arrives just too late to save from lynching the boy who Gracie has just told him is his own son and whose death he has partially caused. But even here Stribling somewhat impairs his very subtle treatment of the Colonel by his mechanical irony. Gracie and the Colonel have just reached the body that dangles from a tree in the square:

> She reached frantically toward the faces around her.
>
> "Gimme a knife! Gimme a knife! Oh Lordy! Lordy! Gimme a knife!"
>
> Two open knives clattered on the brick pavement in the little ring around the trees.
>
> Gracie caught up one and began slashing the rope. It was tough. She haggled and haggled with the dull knife. At last a strand held it. Another stroke cut it apart. Toussaint collapsed. His mother, trying to hold him up, fell with him.
>
> A dozen drunken voices in the mob broke into laughter at the downfall of the negro mother and her dead son.

The last sentence shifts the total emphasis of the scene from the Colonel and Gracie, from the human and individual content, to Stribling's general proposition. The mark of Stribling's success is that the effect of the incident has survived even his ineptitude.

But to return to the general effect of all this on Stribling's art: propagandist art is necessarily incomplete. It is incomplete because the emotional reference, and in fact all reference except for matters of technique, is external. Character appears as a long-hand for a social proposition. Event appears as a sort of allegory, a morality play of "social forces". The whole is a documentation in dramatic form of a social proposition which, presumably, the author wants to see realized in actuality. Propagandist art is never pure propaganda in the first place, for something other than a social conscience forces the choice of the art form, but the purity in this respect depends on the degree in which the author desires to see the practical triumph of his critical ideas and obtrudes that desire. In so far as this aim is possessed, and is obtruded, the work is scientific: it appeals to the scientist, the economist, the sociologist in us, and makes us say, we ought to do something about this. Grant that it may be an abuse we ought to do something about. The response, nevertheless, is not the response evoked by a first-rate novel, play, or poem.

The point, I think, may come clear if Stribling's work is compared with that of certain other novelists who have treated the same material; for instance, William Faulkner. Take the "poor whites" of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* as compared with those of *Teeftallow* or *The Store*. As a citizen, in his practical and public rôle, Faulkner may want to see a broadened way of life possible for the back-country people of Mississippi; but he is too much of an artist to commit himself to the easy satire of the reformer or aesthete. And it is doubtful that Faulkner, the citizen, approves of Pop Eye, the gangster, or of Temple Drake; but his distaste as a citizen is not the theme of *Sanctuary*. And when the mother in *The Sound and the Fury* rebukes her child for using a nickname, saying nicknames are common, the effect is not a piece of satire on her pretensions, but something more immediate, human, and profound; it is perhaps a pathos at this clinging to a symbol of gentility and self-respect in the midst of decay, and if the scene is complicated with irony it is an irony that the symbol should, after all, be so futile and so stupid.

Light in August employs all the material familiar in Stribling's work, race prejudice, class prejudice, sectional prejudice, and violence, but with a far different effect. Christmas, the white Negro of *Light in August*, unlike Toussaint of *The Store*, is caught in an insoluble problem that can only end in tragedy; it is a problem so fundamental that he cannot evade it, no matter what he does or where he goes. The implication in *The Store* is that if Toussaint could go North, and get an education, and pass as white, and, as Gracie wishes, have a white wife, his problem would be solved. But Christmas does pass as white, even in the South, and does go North, and does have, not one, but many white women; but these things are ultimately irrelevant to the circumstance of his life. Even if he were rich and successful, his character being given, they would remain irrelevant. The death of Christmas has some tragic dignity; the lynching of Toussaint is a mere butchery, or on another view, a competent piece of legerdemain to point a moral if not adorn a tale.

The primary difference, a difference perhaps more of intention than of achievement, between the work of Stribling and that of Faulkner seems to be this: the drama that engrosses Stribling is a drama of external circumstance, a conflict drawn in the purely practical world; the drama that engrosses Faulkner concerns a state of being, a conflict involving, to some degree at least, the spiritual integrity of a character. It is this quality of Faulkner's work that has provoked such a remark as the following from a review by Morris Schappes:

> But despite his [Faulkner's] apparent unconsciousness of the complex background that would permit us to understand fully the merely personal situations he explores—a background that would reveal the multiple social relations among the old landed "aristocracy", the newer industrialists, the small peasant farmers, the share cropper, the proletariat of textile and steel mill, the Negro farmer and worker—we still find some meaning in the very surface tension of his world.

It is a question as to which drama, that of Stribling or that of Faulkner, is a "surface tension". The answer may be as simple as this: social constructions and social propositions can only be endowed with value in terms of the individual experience. If that is an answer, obvious as it is, then it is the drama of Stribling, not that of Faulkner, which is concerned with surface tension. And it may well be, in the end, that the work of Faulkner, rather than that of Stribling, is of the order that can give social conscience a meaning.

But the difference may be stated as it relates to method. With Stribling, as I have said, a novel is a device for communication, that is, a device for illustration. The author "intellectualizes" his perceptions so that their vitality is forfeited. The work approaches allegory. But Faulkner, and a considerable group of the younger Southern novelists, are more conservative; they conceive of the novel as *itself* the communication. They are interested in putting, so far as their powers permit, the question about the destiny of certain obscure individuals, their characters, so that the question will remain alive. Perhaps the questions, or some of them, are unanswerable. But that sort of passionate, yet disinterested and patient, contemplation is, presumably, the business of an art, even the art of the novelist. It is a contemplation rooted in the poetic attitude.

But to the critical realist poetry, like religion, would be, I take it, somewhat "greasy".

REVIEWS

Babbitt and Religion*

THE new book by Professor Mercier of Harvard surpasses his previous publications (one of which was crowned by the French Academy) in quality, scope, and interest. It provides a conspectus of the current revival of ethical philosophy (or humanism) in France and America, sketches the connection of the new humanism with that of former times, shows strikingly the challenge it offers to the naturism of the past two hundred years, and carefully discusses its relations to Christianity. The subject as a whole is huge and intricate but Mercier handles it with Gallic clarity, selecting the leading ideas and weaving them into a true pattern. Those of us who are dismayed by the voluminosity of Baron Ernest Seillière and by the difficulties of the Scholastics, old and new —Aquinas seven centuries ago and Maritain today— will find fair and quick pilotage in the present volume. The interest of its theme steadily rises into the sixth chapter, which is nothing less than masterly. In the two final chapters, the current slackens somewhat and the repetitiousness of the style becomes obtrusive.

The central figure in the book is the late Irving Babbitt. A strange and, for many, a solemn quiet is left by the stilling of that battling voice; but now we should be able to hear its meaning more clearly than ever. For Babbitt, strenuous, polemical, and pro-

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THE CHALLENGE OF HUMANISM, an Essay in Comparative Criticism** ***by Louis J. A. Mercier **(OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 288 pp. $3.00)**

found, was one of the least persuasive of writers; and it is fortunate that just at this time a critic so urbane as Mercier should have ready, after years of preparation, a volume that exhibits his colleague's thought against its proper background and in its true perspective. Mercier's treatment is extraordinary in its union of sympathetic insight and detachment. As a Roman Catholic, apparently quite orthodox, he cannot adopt Babbitt's position. But he believes that, so far as it goes, it is less assailable and more fruitful than the creed advanced by any other modern humanist.

After a long survey of Babbitt's challenge to naturism on historical grounds, Mercier devotes a chapter to a much needed clarification of the psychology inherent in his works. The most fundamental of the misunderstandings regarding it is "the failure to note that Babbitt is just as profoundly impressed as any naturist with the fact of 'the many', of the stream of change in which man is living"; but he refuses to become dizzy and unbalanced in watching that stream. "To exaggerate the oneness of life [Mercier writes] and merge it into the All-One, until we lose the sense of individuality, is one extreme; to exaggerate the multiplicity of life, until we lose the sense of standards to which classes of objects should conform, the sense of a universal of which particulars are but variations, is the other. These are the two exaggerations between which naturalism has oscillated." In opposition to that extremism Babbitt asserts: "Life does not give here an element of oneness and there an element of change, but a oneness that is always changing." Man has therefore the task of discovering the abiding in and through the flux; and his main means of doing so is the "higher imagination". The ordinary imagination is apt to preoccupy itself with the flux, as it has done more and more during the past two centuries. Before it can make a reliable contact with "the permanent order" through and beyond the flux it must be disciplined by reason, informed by meditation on the wisdom of the ages, and, above all, lifted and purified by the "higher will".

"Here", says Mercier, "we come to the ultimate aspect of Irving Babbitt's doctrine, the most subtle, no doubt the most objectionable to his naturalistic critics, and the one which, on the other hand, arouses the suspicion of his Christian well-wishers." The author shows that Babbitt's treatment of the higher will has been misrepresented by even so acute a thinker as Dr. Fulton J. Sheen and by even so close a friend as Paul Elmer More. In his chapter on More, Mercier shows how natural has been the transition of that distinguished critic from his earlier views, in which his preoccupation with Platonic and Hindu ideas kept him aloof from Christianity, to his present position in which his Platonism reinforces his belief in the Christian revelation. More may now be called a Catholic Anglican. On this point Mercier remarks: "It is vain to propose to us membership in the Anglican Church, as Mr. More does, on the ground that it offers the kind of revelation which neither in book nor in Church is absolute but in both book and Church possesses a sufficient authority. Logically two imperfect authorities cannot give certitude, especially when each must get its authority from the other." However, More's view, if I understand it, is that a revelation coming from within the believer himself, in a way quite in harmony with Catholic thought, reinforces those two imperfect but sufficient authorities and provides a kind of "certitude" beyond which it is presumptuous in this world to aspire. The kind of "infallibility" which Mercier in the context attributes to the Roman Catholic Church belongs of right, many believe, to the Church Invisible. According to this view the Deity is too wise to place such a guarantee upon any earthly institution no matter how divinely inspired. Elsewhere Mercier condemns what may be called the divinization of the nation in modern times but fails to observe that one root of this was the mediaeval divinization of the Church.

From such questions one returns happily to Babbitt's doctrine of the higher will, which, as Mercier says, is at once "humanism and super-humanism" and has the great advantage, in these unsettled times, of providing a ground of spiritual agreement for persons of all creeds and races. By itself it cannot restore—here I agree with the author—but it can point us to "the dynamism of the Christian ages, the rapture of being delivered from time and place and of being in union for eternity with the whole spiritual world".

Mercier claims that Babbitt in isolating his "higher will" from theistic and revealed religion is true to the natural separation that exists between philosophy and theology, as recognized so notably by the mediaeval Scholastics. In their philosophy they studied man merely as a rational animal moved by natural volition; allocating to theology the subject of man's highest will, *i.e.*, divine Grace. Babbitt regards the higher will in man as ultimately divine, as supernatural in the sense that it checks and controls our natural will and reason. But he establishes it merely as a datum of human consciousness, a "higher immediacy" no less "given" and demonstrable than the immediate clamour of our lower desires. Refusing to go into its metaphysical implications, he shows its supreme importance for human conduct and happiness.

It creates the "man of character", who by his example accomplishes for humanity a solid good that cannot be given by the finest theories and sentiments. The man of spiritual character, whether Christian or non-Christian, saint or citizen, is (in Mercier's words) "one who meditates so deeply on the fact of the higher will in him and concentrates so intensely,—intellectually and imaginatively,—on his own and the race's experience of it that he attains to religious insight". One might add, what Mercier's strictly impersonal method prevents him from doing, that Irving Babbitt himself was such a man and that his works, whatever their fate in other respects, will hold their place as the unconscious self-revelation of a great and helpful person. In his everyday life he was also a fascinating person and it is to be hoped that someone will soon produce a book which, largely omitting his philosophy, shall record the man in his habit as he lived.

G. R. ELLIOTT

Mr. O'Neill's New Play*

MR. O'NEILL'S new play is about John Loving, called *John*, and John's evil alter-ego, called *Loving*. John is writing a novel about himself and his new

* DAYS WITHOUT END *by Eugene O'Neill* (RANDOM HOUSE. 158 pp. $2.50)

wife, whom he loves deeply, but whom he and Loving have betrayed. Loving, the evil self, is a sceptic and a cynic; he wants to be released from the love of the wife, kill her off or divorce her. John, on the other hand, wants to preserve the home and return to the Roman Catholicism of his youth. The question is, how shall the novel end (for Mr. O'Neill never distinguishes very clearly between "life" and "writing")? John and Loving tell the wife, one night, all about the novel, including the betrayal and the death-wishes; she very quickly psychoanalyzes it and decides that her husband wants her to die. She has, providentially, had a touch of the flu; providentially it is raining, and she goes out to catch pneumonia in the damp. But John is converted; Loving his evil alter-ego dies, and the wife recovers: the novel is to have a happy ending. There is a Catholic priest, John's uncle, who helps to bring John back to the fold.

The play appears to be meant as a notice that Mr. O'Neill has turned or is turning Catholic. The newspaper reviewers took it that way, and wore their best condescending elder-brother smiles for the occasion. It is, they say, one of Mr. O'Neill's worst plays—that sophomoric vein of his cropping up again. In this I disagree with them. The play is exactly like all of Mr. O'Neill's plays. Catholicism is a label calculated to offend the peculiar piety of newspapermen, but there is no more Christianity in this play than there is in *Dynamo* or *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. It has, I am sorry to say, all the faults that Mr. O'Neill's plays have always had; and it has as much stagey nervousness (that quality usually known as Mr. O'Neill's Mastery of the Theatre) as the best of them.

What *is* after all that unmistakable O'Neill quality—that lifelessness and *ennui* singularly combined with active discomfort; that triteness which is yet stated so explicitly that it compels us to go on to the so-familiar conclusion? An O'Neill play is like a boring tune that you can't escape: it challenges you to try once more to analyze and have done with it.

For one thing it is obvious that the O'Neill theatre lives by hauling the great, difficult themes down to the level of the man who reads as he runs. A library of O'Neill would look like a file of the *Sunday Times Magazine Section*, wherein Humanity, every week, rebuilds civilization in its own image. Is Marriage a Failure? Has Religion a Future? Where is the Individual in the Modern World? Mr. O'Neill's plays are so tormented by these pulp-and-ink thunderings that they have no ear for Mr. Ezra Pound's elegant plea:

Celebrities from the Trans-Caucasus will belaud Roman
    Celebrities
And expound the distensions of Empire,
But for something to read in normal circumstances?
For a few pages brought down from the forked hill un-
    sullied?

—and Mr. O'Neill's muse, like an overworked office executive, could never say: "We have kept our erasers in order."

If Mr. O'Neill offered us a fresh vision of fundamental problems he would be a Prophet, and loudness would be appropriate. Unfortunately, he can never utter anything but an idea. Ideas are the curse of his career. The entire interest in his plays is then the interest of hearing Mr. O'Neill think. Is Mr. O'Neill For or Against Morality, one asks oneself in the slightly

Spanish lobby of the Guild? Is he still In Conflict with Himself? About his characters one does not bother much; whether they think intelligently or not, they obediently illustrate Mr. O'Neill's latest Idea.

The unsubstantial but loquacious *obedience* of the O'Neill characters is of the essence of the quality we are trying to investigate. Reading or hearing his plays you would never suspect that people existed, independently, in their own right. That is why the plays never give us anything new. We are as it were short-circuited onto that terrible thinking track; the human creature remains somewhere below, and we grind around and around again to the old tune. You cannot see people unless you have some respect, at least for their reality, and you cannot have that without a certain humility. Perhaps if Mr. O'Neill turns Christian he will acquire a little of that virtue. Perhaps his obsession will relax, the world will return, and he will be able to look about himself a little. But as for the present work, it is not about a conversion, it is Mr. O'Neill's debate with himself about a man like Mr. O'Neill who is writing a novel about *another* man like Mr. O'Neill who is toying with the Idea of the conversion of Mr. O'Neill.

The statement that Mr. O'Neill is obsessed with Ideas needs qualification. There have been of course Ideas which regulated and nourished life. But Ideas have no such reality for Mr. O'Neill—he uses them as he does his characters, without respect and without real belief. If his Ideas manipulate his characters like will-less automata, the characters in their turn empty the Ideas of content, and leave them as mere excuses for ill-defined emotion: catchwords, gestures for the final curtain—the antics of the omnipotent histrion, who must agonize in public. Mr. O'Neill's Ideas are never something which was there before the mind, and will be there after the mind has turned away or departed; above all, they are not things which other minds may see and approach from other angles. All this is well seen in his handling of John's "conversion". The interminable mirror-image of the handsome man with the wide mouth is being converted; but to what? Not, it seems, to a religion which offers a definite creed that must be squared with other experience, and a theology which attempts to make clear the object of belief, but rather to some vague catchword about God and Love which, as used in the play, seems to be almost without meaning. The decisive movement of the soul is shown as rootless and arbitrary. Shall it be Gallant Fox or Top Flight? Mr. O'Neill finally plumps wildly for Top Flight, and wins, while the galleries cheer! And, I am sorry to say, the dawn comes through a red-and-green glass window and "mystically" illumines his face.

The play is sophomoric enough, and no mistake—the dailies are right about that, at least. But that has nothing to do with Christianity, it is of the essence of Mr. O'Neill's handling of any theme. At the end of the play John's evil alter-ego dies. Are we to understand that henceforth John is absolutely pure and whole? If so, let the reviewers be at peace. But if Mr. O'Neill writes a play wherein these evils and imperfections are really recognized, let them worry again: the playwright on whom they have heaped such praises will be really changed.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

A Defense of Marlborough*

WE HAVE here the two volumes, so far released, of a comprehensive biographic and historical portraiture of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. Either as word-craft or book-craft, it is an impressive work. Some recent reviewers feel that the author, in the heat of his attack on Macaulay, whom he accuses of deliberate defamation of character and distortion of facts, goes too far and mars the dignity of his effort. Others evade the issue. It cannot be evaded. We have it pushed to the forefront in a preface in which the author says plainly that to vindicate the character of Marlborough against historical calumnies, and particularly those perpetuated by the great weight of Macaulay's *History*, was a prime motivation in his decision to write the book. He even cites (in this preface) proof that the great historian knew of Paget's *Examen*, in which the vilest blot on Marlborough's character (betrayal of the expedition against Brest) was shown to be a fabrication; knew it and kept silent.

Heat, we must admit, is not always conducive to clearness. It is, however, human, and may indicate a deeper sympathy, a better capacity for understanding one's subject—when that subject is a person—than cold analysis. Here is an instance. In a letter to William on the eve of his invasion of England, John Churchill writes what must seem to an unprejudiced reader a straightforward, soldierly statement of loyalty to the

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* **MARLBOROUGH, His Life and Times** ***by the Right Honourable Winston S. Churchill.*** **(SCRIBNER'S. Two volumes, each 311 pp. Together, $6.00)**

Protestant cause and to the Dutch Prince as its champion. Macaulay, in his *History*, alludes to this as a "letter written with a certain elevation of language, which was the sure mark that he was going to commit a baseness". This is an incredible construction to put on such a document; unless, indeed, the depravity of its author was known and established before all the world. (And this the historian appears to have assumed.) Again, Macaulay says of John Churchill in his love for Sarah Jennings, "He must have been enamoured indeed". We are left to suppose that this condition of titillated infatuation continued throughout a lifetime of constant marital devotion, merely serving to warp the otherwise "sure-footed judgement" of "that cold heart". Whether a man of letters and a popular political idol who has never married or known a strong affection for any woman other than his sister is best qualified to appraise these inner matters, the reader may judge.

The matter goes deeper. Mr. Winston Churchill's viewpoint may be archaic but it is not on that account fossil, as is that of some early Victorians. These volumes are proof that it is alive and vigorous. They assert a spirit that is particularly robust, virile, and English; a spirit without which the history of our free (I should rather say once free) institutions could not have been what it is. By this vigorous, competent, and convincing explication of the picture, a hardy spirit, a keen mind, a great genius is brought into comprehensible relation with historic time; is made human, is woven into the very texture and fabric of the period. Much of the significance of this book comes of its recognition of the English spirit in certain leaders, certain individual men. Naturally, under a purely mechanistic interpretation of history, Winston Churchill's present arresting accomplishment—and it is that, considered only as literature—would have no significance. Note that the treatment of other characters in the scene is sympathetic, vivid, personal; the characterization sure and swift. Note that not only political England but an entire continental Europe of the time is brought into one clear, co-ordinated picture. Crucial actions and attitudes are well handled. A sense of authentic background is pervasive. Interest—purely as narrative—is cumulative and compelling. Controversial matters aside, the reader's mind is enriched. I find no taint of an imaginative license such as lately brought into question the technique popularized by Lytton Strachey. Imaginative reconstructions (and some are needed where data are wanting) are here plainly avowed.

Following the stirring and dramatic events in the course of which William is established on the English throne with Mary as joint sovereign, and the realm quieted, overt events (of any large consequence) cease. That "riband of English history" which this author is unrolling becomes a mesh of intrigue. Communications incredible to us today pass almost unremarked between sworn enemies on all sides or on no sides of current political and religious embroilments. Here, if anywhere, doubt rears its head. Admittedly, one's faith in the personal integrity of Marlborough, as well as of every other courtier, general, and statesman snared in this grey mesh of duplicity, wavers. Will overt action clear this mist and bring characters into clear relief if not into spiritual resolution?

The great campaigns, the military actions that brought Marlborough to the height of his fame are not covered here. Volume II ends with the formation of the second Grand Alliance, and the death of William. In his last hours William commended to his successor as fittest to guide in the councils of the realm and to command its armies, the man whose genius he had earlier thwarted. Was he right or wrong in so doing? Was he commending for first responsibility in the coming struggle against France a knave and a traitor?

This portraiture is not complete, but the lines are firmly drawn. We see a man whom hardship, calumny, and neglect have only disciplined; one who under every conceivable shock maintains his poise, and to whom wrangling factions must turn in a crisis. His is not the simple, forthright character that Englishmen love. Polite, prosperous, humanitarian England of the nineteenth century shrank in horror at the legend of his duplicity.

Even without the concluding volumes, this work of Winston Churchill's makes possible a new construction of Marlborough, the man. Not duplicity, but duality is the key; a double aspect alike of mind and affections. He who in youth must keep a Cavalier face for his father and turn a Puritan complaisance toward his grandmother, could, in after life, present more than one aspect to friends or foes . . . and keep his own counsel. Similarly he could be calculating in his relations with the Duchess of Cleveland and then—freed of that intrigue—remain constant and warm in his devotion to Sarah. Perhaps history may not always find it necessary to fasten on such an integration of aspects the stigma of knave and traitor. But the vindication of Marlborough apart, if there is anything worthy of respect in liberal aristocratic government, these volumes must be counted as among its defences.

HENRY TRACY

Dean Inge and the Astronomers*

IN THIS book Dean Inge examines the cosmological verdict which is being put forward by our physicists and astronomers today. According to Eddington, it is the most certain fact of science that the world is running down like a clock. With equal assurance Jeans tells us that the inevitable end of the universe is annihilation—of life, of consciousness, of memory, even of the very elements of life. It seems that the second law of thermodynamics, the famous Law of Entropy, shows that the total energy of the universe is being irrevocably dissipated. Our universe is moving in the direction of final catastrophe along a path that it cannot retrace. The Law of Entropy is unilinear and irreversible.

It is therefore the teaching of science that ultimately the whole human race shall go down into the pit and all our thoughts shall perish. Life and death, and the love that is stronger than death, shall be as though they had never been. All the labours of man, his genius, his sufferings, his devotion, shall have been utterly in vain. Nothing can save us from final extinction.

As a Christian philosopher Dean Inge rises to meet the challenge of this dogmatism of natural science. He justly believes that the multitude of common men is little interested in the mathematical processes by which our scientists arrive at these conclusions. What concerns the ordinary man is the credible value of the teaching itself. Here is the Dean's presentation of the case:

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* GOD AND THE ASTRONOMERS *by William Ralph Inge* (LONGMAN'S, GREEN. 301 pp. $4.00)

> Most of us acquiesce in the thought of our own death, because we believe that in some sense or other *non omnis moriar*. Even those who do not cherish much hope or expectation of their own personal survival are confident that the interests which give meaning to our life, and the causes for which we labour, will not die with us, but will continue to operate and will, we hope, be victorious. But that the sum of things should end in nothingness is a painful stultification of our belief in the values of life.

In examining the cosmological teaching of the scientists, he follows two lines of argument. In the first place, he enters the scientific domain and makes a logical analysis of the prophecy of ultimate annihilation. He discusses what seem to him to be fallacies in the arguments of the scientists, unmasks what he considers to be examples of illicit logical process, and definitely accuses his scientific opponents of divorcing their speculations from concrete fact and of playing with Berkeleyan idealism or pure mentalism. Yet in all this style of argument he writes with such diffidence and humility that he fails to win the sympathy of the reader. Dean Inge is not a scientist, and more than once in the course of his argument he expresses the fear that he may go beyond his depth.

But when he argues, not as a scientist but as a philosopher, he is on ground that is familiar to him. In making his critical appraisal of the new cosmology he takes his stand on what he calls the Great Tradition, "the classical tradition of Christian philosophy, which Roman Catholic scholars call the *philosophia perennis*, the perennial philosophy". This perennial philosophy he believes to be not merely the only possible Christian philosophy but the only system of thought which will be found to be ultimately satisfying to the thinking man.

He argues that the Law of Entropy, if it holds good of the entire physical universe, points to a creation in time by some Power outside the degenerative process which science observes proceeding to an inevitable end. If the universe is running down like a clock, then it must, at some time or other, have been wound up like a clock; and, if it was wound up once, it can be wound up again. In other words, God stands outside His world. The Creator transcends the universe He has made.

This is the central idea of Dean Inge's book. The Great Tradition is really the tradition of the principle of divine transcendence. It is directly opposed to the new cosmology of the scientists, who are committed to a philosophy of immanentism. For the scientists of today as well as for nearly all the popular writers of the nineteenth century and for the Italian neo-idealists of our own generation, God is inextricably bound up with the universe and His fortunes are entangled with those of the cosmos. Conceived of as a Being wholly immanent in the world, the acceptance of entropy as a universal law leaves His origin inexplicable and His doom certain. A Deity under sentence of death, at however distant a date, does not possess the attributes which religion holds to belong to the notion of God.

But those who are even remotely in the Great Tradition are not dismayed by the findings of astronomical science. They know that our world-order is after all only one of the purposes of God, which like all purposes that are not frustrate has its proper beginning, middle, and end.

The idea of a dying world, which was so shocking to the Victorians, did not dismay earlier generations, who were theists, not pantheists. They believed it almost as a matter of course, and being theists they never thought of God being involved in the fate of His creatures. The writer to the Hebrews quotes and makes his own the words of the Psalmist: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish but Thou remainest."

What is most likely to provoke criticism is Dean Inge's assumption of a single Great Tradition, Catholic and Platonic, unifying the thought of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine of Hippo, Aquinas, Spinoza, Bradley, Bosanquet, and Von Hügel. It may be asserted that any such eclectic list is unjustifiable; for one thing, it overlooks many significant distinctions. For example, to see Thomas Aquinas as merely a version of Plato is to miss the aggressive realism of the famous scholastic. And for another thing, it might be argued that Dean Inge's philosophers have not even a common cosmological outlook, because the Deity of Plato is not the God of Augustine nor is Aristotle's Mover the God of Aquinas. But the force of such criticisms is lessened when it is remembered that what is assumed to hold all these diverse philosophies together is the common concept, in greater or less degree, of a transcendent Being who stands outside the cosmic scheme of things. It is this traditional concept that Dean Inge opposes to the cosmological teachings of the new astronomy.

Not less remarkable than his alliance with the *philosophia perennis* is his courteous tribute to the Thomists of today. Maritain and Bloy in France, Sheen in America, D'Arcy and Dawson in England, are the recipients of his compliments, although he finds in some of the Thomists a tendency to undervalue religious experience as an organ for the apprehension of truth. As for the Thomists, there is much in this book to provoke their criticism. But in its application of the principle of Divine transcendence to the cosmological problem of the day, the book leaves little to be desired. God is both in us and out of us, says the Dean. God is both immanent and transcendent, and there can be no fundamental contradiction between God as known to philosophic thought and God as known to personal devotion.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Eighteenth-Century England*

THOSE who have found *Shakespeare's England* both useful and readable will welcome a companion work on *Johnson's England*, luxuriously bound in two beautiful volumes and edited by A. S. Turberville, the author of *English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century*. In his preface the editor limits the period to 1737-1784. He defines the purpose of the book as being "descriptive rather than critical or expository"; he abjures the judicial attitude as anachronistic, holding that the historian "must yield himself to his subject and become the creature of the time he investigates", accepting "the limitations of contemporary vision that he may experience its intensity". Both the editor and Mr. Trevelyan, who writes the opening chapter, are anxious that the reader shall conclude with them that the age was "in all manner of ways extraordinarily energetic and progressive", that "the eighteenth-century English, on the average, were an earnest, virile, original, unconventional, and energetic race". The twenty-five chapters which follow the first treat "The Church", "The Navy", "The Army", "Exploration and Discovery", "Travel and Communications", "London and the Life of the Town", "Town-Life in the Provinces", "Industry and Trade", "Agriculture and Rural Life", "Poverty, Crime, Philanthropy", "Manners, Meals, and Domestic Pastimes", "Sports and Games", "Costume", "Taste", "Painting and Engraving", "Sculpture", "Architecture and the Garden", "The Interior of the House", "The Drama and the Theatre", "Music", "Education, Schools, and Universities", "Science, Mathematics, and Astronomy", "Medicine", "The Law and the Lawyers", "Authors and Booksellers", "The Newspaper". The thirty authors of these chapters, most of whom are English, are certainly among the most distinguished authorities on their special subjects. Each chapter is followed by a brief and faintly critical bibliography of from fifteen to forty titles which have helped to make such a book possible as a successor, for its period, to H. D. Traill's *Social England*. Many of the individual chapters are distinguished by charm of style and an ability to present the subjects pictorially. As a whole the book has a good deal of warmth and colour; indeed, the editor tells us that the book is "intended . . . for those who study a past epoch for the sheer pleasure it gives them, who enjoy wandering in an England at once familiar and so strange, anxious rather to explore and to learn to understand than to be forever apportioning praise or blame". And it cannot be denied that not infrequently the authors succeed in making their delight in antiquarianism contagious. They are aided, in no small measure, by one hundred and fifty-eight exceptional and pertinently chosen illustrations.

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* JOHNSON'S ENGLAND, An Account of the Life and Manners of his Age *edited by A. S. Turberville* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. Two volumes. 405 & 404 pp. $14.00)

If such is a brief description of a book which has been the product of most unusual resources, what is to be said of its value? Certainly it will be of considerable use to scholars for its somewhat "popular" summaries of research on its various topics, but scholars will in most cases prefer to go directly to the original research publications listed in the bibliographies. Its multiplicity of detail in showing picturesquely the complexity and many-sidedness of the life of the period should warn those who might be tempted to too facile interpretations of the age in the light of over-simplified formulas. Admitting these values, then, and the book's wealth of accurate detail, what can one say of its shortcomings? Although a careful reader will find ideas alluded to in unexpected places (Deism is mentioned under "Education", and Wilkes's political liberalism under "Newspapers"), what will exasperate many readers is the pervading tendency to rest content not only with the accurate and readable description of chaos, but with chaos for the most part of the surfaces, with the outward and external life.

Many of the authors display an ability which seems almost perverse in stressing what is peripheral and superficial and in failing to come to grips with what is central. One unfamiliar with the period would hardly guess from the few references to the subject that these years saw the fundamental conflict between conservatism and radicalism in philosophy and political theory described by such scholars as Leslie Stephen, G. S. Veitch, and others. The editor indicates in his preface the sort of questions he has encouraged the individual authors to answer:

> Every one has heard of Capability Brown and his landscape gardening, but what sort of trees and flowers were to be found in the gardens? Grub Street has become a legend, but how did the authors get their books published and what was the system of remuneration? Cricket was played, but what was the shape of the bat?

Many readers, I fancy, would willingly leave some questions of this sort unanswered in return for answers to questions aimed straight at the heart of that great conflict of first principles then shaking the Europe of Dr. Johnson and of Rousseau, a conflict which has in no small measure been reflected in America and in Europe to the present day. From this point of view the best chapter in the book, although inadequate, is that on "Poverty, Crime, Philanthropy", by J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond. Although the book appears to try to present a background for a man-of-letters and to be aimed mainly at students of literature, its diffuseness and lack of focus is further illustrated in its omission of any adequate chapters on literary theory, although there is a superficial chapter on "Taste".

Grateful as we are for the contributions of Mr. Turberville's colleagues, one can scarcely help wishing that equal publishing resources might be granted to another group who would not only describe but explain, interpret, and appraise the life of this pregnant era in a vastly more penetrating and trenchant manner. Such a group should include such eighteenth-century scholars as Ronald Crane, Paul Spencer Wood, Arthur Lovejoy, Oliver Elton, Raymond D. Havens, Odell Shepard, C. N. Greenough, Ernest Bernbaum, Alan McKillop, Howard Mumford Jones, Louis Cazamian, Hoxie Fairchild, Ernest H. Wright, Alfred Cobbam, Paul Kaufman, J. L. Lowes, C. A. Moore, Jacob Viner, C. B. Tinker, Amy Louise Reed, Lois Whitney, and E. Halévy. One can wager that a book by such a group would not only deal adequately with the picturesque surfaces of the eighteenth century, but with the patterns of ideas below the surfaces which gave life meaning and purpose.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

Small Industries and Handcrafts*

THE tendency to seek the solution of our present moral and economic problems in the experience of the past is so recent in this forward-looking American civilization that one inclines to greet even its smallest manifestation with sympathy; and herein lies the interest of a new American guild movement begun in Washington last month under the style of "The Guilds of America Foundation". It is "a plan to incorporate nationally into the industrial fabric of the United States a modernization of the old Guild system". It contemplates "the revivification of small industry, much devitalized by the deadening influence of mass production; the stimulation of existing local industries, and, through research and experimentation, the creation of new ones suitable to the resources and opportunities of a region". The Foundation enjoys the backing of such public figures as Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip; Dr. Alexis Carrel of the Rockefeller Institute; Mr. William A. Julian, Treasurer of the United States; Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota. Its purposes have been outlined in a large and sumptuous volume prepared by its moving genius, Mr. Henry Creange.

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* THE GUILDS OF AMERICA *by Henry Creange* (GUILDS OF AMERICA FOUNDATION. 217 pp. $3.75)

Such terms as "guild organization of society", "restoration of craftsmanship", "decentralization of industry" have recently been heard from so many diverse and mutually antipathetic sources that it is well to examine what Mr. Creange means by them. His point of departure has been well stated by Mr. Vanderlip:

> The development of the machine age has now gone on to such an extent that a comparatively small number of workmen can produce those mass-production goods which are the necessities of all the people, even on a high plane of material life. That means that there must either be a continuous idle class or there must be evolved fresh services, not connected with mass production, to absorb a sufficient number of workers.

We have, then, millions of workers whom machine industry as at present organized cannot absorb, and we are going to put them to work by other means. How shall we proceed? For Mr. Creange, the means are twofold: the decentralization of large industrial undertakings, and the creation of small ones. By the former he means the kind of thing which Mr. Ford has proposed: the manufacture of parts of a complicated mechanism, or the carrying out of one of the several processes involved in a single product, in small communities at the behest and for the account of the large manufacturer. By building up small industry—and this is the largest part of his programme—Mr. Creange visualizes a revival of handcrafts proper: in his own terms, the fabrication of objects in which beauty and mode are important factors (silverware, wrought iron, specialized textiles, cutlery, toys, dresses). This can be done, he argues, under three conditions. First, that a centralized publicity campaign be undertaken to "dramatize" for the public the romantic appeal of hand-made goods, and thus persuade them to buy; second, that money be provided by the Government to start these small producers in business; third, that the objects be produced according to designs furnished by a central planning bureau in close touch with "public demand". As a proponent of "art in industry" and the originator of what he calls the "three-phase system for the mass production of style goods", Mr. Creange assigns large importance—undoubtedly only too well justified—to the function of novelty in stimulating public demand.

All this brings up a number of questions in the minds of those for whom the chief virtue of small industry is that it may be owned by the small and independent man, and of handcrafts that they may render the craftsman economically free. The kind of decentralization of industry which Mr. Creange is discussing can hardly be approached from this point of view at all: it represents essentially no more than an amelioration—admirable enough in itself—of the conditions under which the wage-slave works; it does not in the least diminish his economic dependence upon the large industrialist; the man who makes bolts with a dozen other workmen for Mr. Ford in Alabama is just as much at the mercy of Mr. Ford as if he worked with 10,000 of his fellows in Detroit. The advantage of the change is that by permitting the workman to live the more normal life of a small community, it may accustom him to an atmosphere in which small business and small property still exists. The disadvantage is that isolated in a small community he is unable to avail himself of the opportunities for organized resistance which the industrial city permits.

As for the revival of handcrafts as such, Mr. Creange would seem to have neglected several fundamental considerations. The kind of object whose hand production will absorb the workers rejected by the industrial system is by definition the kind of object in which labour is by far the largest element. Such objects will always cost more than the functionally equivalent object made by machine. Those which have in the past been sold principally on the basis of their aesthetic appeal have of necessity found a market only among the small group which can afford this type of pure luxury, and can hope to find no larger market now. That far larger class of handmade objects which have been sold on the basis of their utility (*i.e.* durability, efficiency, satisfaction in use) have depended for their success upon a public capable of judging that utility for themselves. The modern urge for novelty has smothered this judgement in all save a few (the average man would rather have two pairs of machine-made shoes than one pair well-made by hand that would last twice as long); and Mr. Creange, with his Planned Novelty and his Romance of Hand Craftsmanship would seem to be leading the public's judgement even further astray.

In short, confronted by a capitalist industry which produces more goods by mass production than the public can be persuaded to buy, and which can find no room for several million workers, Mr. Creange would simply create a new class of goods and set out upon a fresh sales campaign. The truth of the matter is that we shall never re-create small industry without more fundamental changes than Mr. Creange seems to envisage. So long as the public attitude is generally favourable to large units of production and large distributing units, the small man is inevitably at a disadvantage if he can survive at all. Hence the first necessity is that the majority of the public shall actively desire to see the sources of production and the means of distribution resting in the hands of the many rather than the few—a revolutionary programme which must result in the surrender of power by those who now hold it. It is to be feared that any attempt to approach the problem of small industry merely by setting up a new class of small industrial undertakings to absorb the unemployed, or to stimulate a genuine desire for hand-made goods in a public which is at the same time beset by the meretricious appeal of mass-produced novelty, is bound to fail.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWE